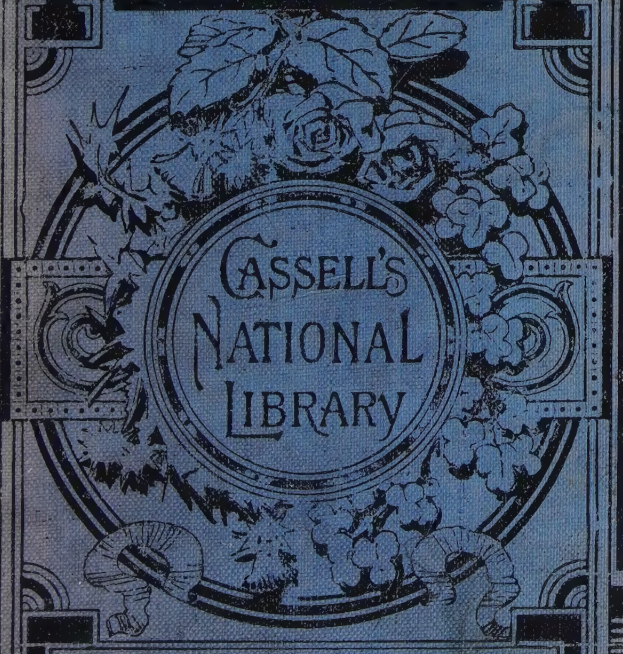
POEMS

ALEXANDER POPE



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POEMS.

[1700—1714.]

BY

ALEXANDER POPE.

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INTRODUCTION.

ALEXANDER POPE was born on the 21st of May, in the year of the English Revolution, 1688. His father, a draper, was a Roman Catholic. He was born when father and mother were each forty-six years old. The Revolution of 1688 brought changes unwelcome to the Roman Catholics. Pope's father had no faith in the new order of things, and is said to have withdrawn all money invested in English Government securities. There was enough to retire upon, and he retired to Binfield, a village nine miles from Windsor, in the neighbourhood of Windsor Forest. There the child, crook-backed and delicate of health, the only child of his mother, was tenderly cared for. He had short experience of school at Twyford and in London, but delicate health and the fact that he was bred a Roman Catholic withdrew him soon from all other than home training. A priest lived in the family, who acted as tutor, and Pope learnt from him Latin and Greek in a way that made him quick to read and enjoy the Latin and Greek poets, but without classical scholarship. Delighting as a child in English poetry, he made verses early. It is he who said of himself—following Ovid—"I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

Pope's father encouraged instead of thwarting his delight in verse. At Easthampstead, near Binfield, Sir William Trumbull, who had been a Secretary of State, was closing his life in retirement to his native village. He found pleasure in the boy's precocity, and Pope was much in Sir William Trumbull's company. At Whiteknights, near Reading, there was a Roman Catholic family of Englefields, friends of the Popes. A daughter of that house was married to Mr. Lester Blount, of Mapledurham, an old mansion by the Thames, near Reading. Through the Englefields young Pope passed to friendship with the

Blounts, who had two daughters, one Teresa, the other Martha, both especial friends to Pope ; and Martha, finally, the dearest friend of all. Through the Englefields also, young Pope became acquainted with William Wycherley, who had written plays in the time of Charles the Second, and with Henry Cromwell, an elderly man about town who affected wit. Thus an unclean touch showed itself in the tone of some of those translations and imitations from which, as here given, I have struck out, in one place and another, about a hundred and fifty lines. In the poems forming the first section of this volume, which are wholly Pope's, there is no such fault, and nothing has been altered or omitted. There is no such fault in his later poems.

Pope's translations from Ovid and Statius represent him as a youth bringing his love of literature to his Latin studies. Pope's imitations of Chaucer were suggested by the fact that Dryden, to whom he looked up not only as the master poet of the days of his youth, but with whom he was in closer sympathy because he died a Roman Catholic, had in his last volume of verses modernised some parts of Chaucer. But young Pope had not read Chaucer aright. His Wife of Bath is a gross misrepresentation. It is too unlike to be a caricature. Chaucer's Wife of Bath is a cheerful woman, with the animal side uppermost, but at the same time a good honest human animal, whose ideas lie hooped within the marriage ring. Pope's Wife of Bath is a vehicle for feeble imitation of that tone of contempt for womanhood which in the days of his youth survived from the bad days of Charles the Second. In this, and in his version of January and May, Pope causes Chaucer, the first great poet in our literature who upheld the dignity and beauty of womanhood, who paid to it all reverence, and was even as Shakespeare in his sense of it, to stand among the scoffers. One might as fairly reproduce St. Jerome as an atheist. But in all this Pope was reproducing affectations of his time.

Pope was but seventeen when his "Pastorals" had been handed about in manuscript and praised by wits. Tonson, the publisher, who had a Miscellany in which good pieces of fugitive verse were collected—a Miscellany founded by Dryden in his last years, and carried on to a seventh

volume after Dryden's death—asked leave to print Pope's Pastorals, and he did print them in the Miscellany three years afterwards, in 1708. They came at the end of the volume, which opened with Pastorals by Ambrose Philips, a minor poet, sixteen years older than Pope, and, next to Steele, the most intimate friend of Addison. Ambrose Philips took for his model Spenser's Pastorals, and Pope followed the classical conventions of his day. Pope's was the worse plan, but he was the better poet.

Pope's *Essay on Criticism* was published separately in 1711. Writing about writing was the fashion then, and this was writing about writing about writing. John Dennis, whom it cited as Appius (he had written a play on Appius and Virginia), attacked it, and was then a formidable critic. But it was read by Addison. Steele's *Spectator* was then appearing, and Addison, from pure appreciation of the genius of a writer then unknown to him, made Pope's *Essay on Criticism* the subject of a generous *Spectator* paper on the 20th December, 1711. That helping hand of Addison's drew Pope up to firm ground. He wrote gratefully to Steele; was referred to Addison; acquired the friendship of both; and showed his gratitude by sending to Steele his poem of the *Messiah*, published in the *Spectator* of the 14th of May. It was at Steele's suggestion, also, that he wrote that version of the lines of Hadrian entitled *The Dying Christian to his Soul.*

Windsor Forest, that was not far from Pope at Binfield, formed the subject of a poem modelled upon Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, and published early in 1713. This was the year after the appearance in *Lintot's Miscellany* of *The Rape of the Lock*, in its first form. Lord Petre had at Hampton Court, while Miss Arabella Fermor was seated at cards, stolen behind her and cut off a lock of her hair. The lady was offended. There was a quarrel between these two members of Roman Catholic families, both within the circle of Pope's friends. Another of his Roman Catholic friends, John Caryll, suggested to Pope that he might clear away such quarrel with a jest, by making it the subject of a mock-heroic poem. He did so, with the happiest result. The little poem when it first appeared in *Lintot's Miscellany* delighted every reader. Addison pronounced it *merum sal*, and sought to dissuade

Pope from his design for an enlargement of it. Such alterations usually fail. But the reading of a French book, the *Comte de Gabalis*, had suggested to Pope sylphs and gnomes as supernatural beings of the right order to serve as what was technically called "machinery" in his mock-heroic; for the epic style was supposed to require intervention of supernatural beings in human affairs. Jove and Apollo were too big for his theme. These little creatures, suggested by a book that talked about the Rosicrucians, supplied what Pope called his "Rosicrucian machinery." Interwoven with his poem they led to its extension to five books; and as a poem in five books, with an engraved illustration to each, it appeared again in 1714. In one of the books there is ingenious addition of a game of ombre, which is played through so precisely that any one who has learnt the game from *The Court Gamester* of those days can follow it exactly in Pope's verse.

Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, founded upon a translation from the French, was published in 1717, Pope's age being then twenty-nine, and in the same year appeared the lines *To the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*. There were two such ladies in whom Pope was interested, who died abroad after suffering domestic persecution. One was a Mrs. Weston, who did not die until 1724; the other a Mrs. Cope, to whom Pope sent money when she was in great distress.

H. M.

POPE'S EARLIER POEMS.

SPRING.

THE FIRST PASTORAL,

OR

DAMON.

TO SIR WILLIAM TRUMBULL.

FIRST in these fields I try the sylvan strains,
Nor blush to sport on Windsor's blissful plains:
Fair Thames, flow gently from thy sacred spring,
While on thy banks Sicilian Muses sing;
Let vernal airs through trembling osiers play,
And Albion's cliffs resound the rural lay.

You, that too wise for pride, too good for power,
Enjoy the glory to be great no more,
And carrying with you all the world can boast,
To all the world illustriously are lost!
Oh, let my Muse her slender reed inspire,
Till in your native shades you tune the lyre:
So when the nightingale to rest removes,
The thrush may chant to the forsaken groves,
But, charmed to silence, listens while she sings,
And all the aërial audience clap their wings.

Soon as the flocks shook off the nightly dews,
Two swains, whom love kept wakeful, and the Muse,
Poured o'er the whitening vale their fleecy care,
Fresh as the morn, and as the season fair:

The dawn now blushing on the mountain's side,
Thus Daphnis spoke, and Strephon thus replied.

DAPHNIS.

Hear how the birds, on every bloomy spray,
With joyous music wake the dawning day!
Why sit we mute when early linnets sing,
When warbling Philomel salutes the spring?
Why sit we sad when Phosphor shines so clear,
And lavish nature paints the purple year?

STREPHON.

Sing then, and Damon shall attend the strain,
While yon slow oxen turn the furrowed plain.
Here the bright crocus and blue violet glow;
Here western winds on breathing roses blow.
I'll stake yon lamb, that near the fountain plays,
And from the brink his dancing shade surveys.

DAPHNIS.

And I this bowl, where wanton ivy twines,
And swelling clusters bend the curling vines:
Four figures rising from the work appear,
The various seasons of the rolling year;
And what is that, which binds the radiant sky,
Where twelve fair signs in beauteous order lie?

DAMON.

Then sing by turns, by turns the Muses sing,
Now hawthorns blossom, now the daisies spring,
Now leaves the trees, and flowers adorn the ground,
Begin, the vales shall every note rebound.

STREPHON.

Inspire me, Phœbus, in my Delia's praise
With Waller's strains, or Granville's moving lays!
A milk-white bull shall at your altars stand,
That threats a fight, and spurns the rising sand.

DAPHNIS.

O love! for Sylvia let me gain the prize,
And make my tongue victorious as her eyes;
No lambs or sheep for victims I'll impart,
Thy victim, love, shall be the shepherd's heart.

STREPHON.

Me gentle Delia beckons from the plain,
Then hid in shades, eludes her eager swain;
But feigns a laugh, to see me search around,
And by that laugh the willing fair is found.

DAPHNIS.

The sprightly Sylvia trips along the green,
She runs, but hopes she does not run unseen!
While a kind glance at her pursuer flies,
How much at variance are her feet and eyes!

STREPHON.

O'er golden sands let rich Pactolus flow,
And trees weep amber on the banks of Po;
Blest Thames's shores the brightest beauties yield,
Feed here my lambs, I'll seek no distant field.

DAPHNIS.

Celestial Venus haunts Idalia's groves;
Diana Cynthus, Ceres Hybla loves;
If Windsor shades delight the matchless maid,
Cynthus and Hybla yield to Windsor shade.

STREPHON.

All nature mourns, the skies relent in showers,
Hushed are the birds, and closed the drooping flowers;
If Delia smile, the flowers begin to spring,
The skies to brighten, and the birds to sing.

DAPHNIS.

All nature laughs, the groves are fresh and fair,
The sun's mild lustre warms the vital air;

If Sylvia smiles, new glories gild the shore,
And vanquished nature seems to charm no more.

STREPHON.

In spring the fields, in autumn hills I love,
At morn the plains, at noon the shady grove,
But Delia always ; absent from her sight,
Nor plains at morn, nor groves at noon delight.

DAPHNIS.

Sylvia's like autumn ripe, yet mild as May,
More bright than noon, yet fresh as early day ;
Ev'n spring displeases, when she shines not here ;
But blest with her, 'tis spring throughout the year.

STREPHON.

Say, Daphnis, say, in what glad soil appears
A wondrous tree that sacred monarchs bears :
Tell me but this, and I'll disclaim the prize,
And give the conquest to thy Sylvia's eyes.

DAPHNIS.

Nay, tell me first, in what more happy fields
The thistle springs, to which the lily yields ;
And then a nobler prize I will resign ;
For Sylvia, charming Sylvia, shall be thine.

DAMON.

Cease to contend, for, Daphnis, I decree
The bowl to Strephon, and the lamb to thee :
Blest swains, whose nymphs in every grace excel ;
Blest nymphs, whose swains those graces sing so well !
Now rise, and haste to yonder woodbine bowers,
A soft retreat from sudden vernal showers ;
The turf with rural dainties shall be crowned,
While opening blooms diffuse their sweets around.
For see ! the gathering flocks to shelter tend,
And from the Pleiads fruitful showers descend.

SUMMER.

THE SECOND PASTORAL,

OR

ALEXIS.

To Dr. Garth.

A shepherd's boy (he seeks no better name)
Led forth his flocks along the silver Thame,
Where dancing sunbeams on the waters played,
And verdant alders formed a quivering shade.
Soft as he mourned, the streams forgot to flow,
The flocks around a dumb compassion show,
The naiads wept in every watery bower,
And Jove consented in a silent shower.

Accept, O Garth, the Muse's early lays,
That adds this wreath of ivy to thy bays;
Hear what from love unpractised hearts endure,
From love, the sole disease thou canst not cure.

Ye shady beeches, and ye cooling streams,
Defence from Phœbus,' not from Cupid's beams,
To you I mourn, nor to the deaf I sing,
The woods shall answer, and their echo ring.
The hills and rocks attend my doleful lay,
Why art thou prouder and more hard than they?
The bleating sheep with my complaints agree,
They parched with heat, and I inflamed by thee.
The sultry Sirius burns the thirsty plains,
While in thy heart eternal winter reigns.

Where stray ye, Muses, in what lawn or grove,
While your Alexis pines in hopeless love?
In those fair fields where sacred Isis glides,
Or else where Cam his winding vales divides?
As in the crystal spring I view my face,

Fresh rising blushes paint the watery glass ;
But since those graces please thy eyes no more,
I shun the fountains which I sought before.
Once I was skilled in every herb that grew,
And every plant that drinks the morning dew ;
Ah, wretched shepherd, what avails thy art,
To cure thy lambs, but not to heal thy heart !

Let other swains attend the rural care,
Feed fairer flocks, or richer fleeces shear :
But nigh yon mountain let me tune my lays,
Embrace my love, and bind my brows with bays.
That flute is mine which Colin's tuneful breath
Inspired when living, and bequeathed in death ;
He said, Alexis, take this pipe, the same
That taught the groves my Rosalinda's name :
But now the reeds shall hang on yonder tree,
For ever silent, since despised by thee.
Oh, were I made by some transforming power
The captive bird that sings within thy bower !
Then might my voice thy listening ears employ,
And I those kisses he receives, enjoy.

And yet my numbers please the rural throng,
Rough satyrs dance, and Pan applauds the song :
The nymphs, forsaking every cave and spring,
Their early fruit, and milk-white turtles bring ;
Each amorous nymph prefers her gifts in vain,
On you their gifts are all bestowed again.
For you the swains the fairest flowers design,
And in one garland all their beauties join ;
Accept the wreath which you deserve alone,
In whom all beauties are comprised in one.

See what delights in sylvan scenes appear !
Descending gods have found Elysium here.
In woods bright Venus with Adonis strayed,
And chaste Diana haunts the forest shade.
Come, lovely nymph, and bless the silent hours,

When swains from shearing seek their nightly bowers,
When weary reapers quit the sultry field,
And crowned with corn their thanks to Ceres yield.
This harmless grove no lurking viper hides,
But in my breast the serpent love abides.
Here bees from blossoms sip the rosy dew,
But your Alexis knows no sweets but you.
Oh, deign to visit our forsaken seats,
The mossy fountains, and the green retreats!
Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;
Where'er you tread, the blushing flowers shall rise,
And all things flourish where you turn your eyes.
Oh, how I long with you to pass my days,
Invoke the Muses, and resound your praise!
Your praise the birds shall chant in every grove,
And winds shall waft it to the powers above;
But would you sing, and rival Orpheus' strain,
The wondering forests soon should dance again;
The moving mountains hear the powerful call,
And headlong streams hang listening in their fall!
But see, the shepherds shun the noonday heat,
The lowing herds to murmuring brooks retreat,
To closer shades the panting flocks remove;
Ye gods! and is there no relief for love?
But soon the sun with milder rays descends
To the cool ocean, where his journey ends.
On me love's fiercer flames for ever prey,
By night he scorches, as he burns by day.

AUTUMN.

THE THIRD PASTORAL,

OR

HYLAS AND ÆGON.

To Mr. Wycherley.

Beneath the shade a spreading beech displays,
Hylas and Ægon sang their rural lays;
This mourned a faithless, that an absent love,
And Delia's name and Doris' filled the grove.
Ye Mantuan nymphs, your sacred succour bring;
Hylas and Ægon's rural lays I sing.

Thou, whom the Nine with Plautus' wit inspire,
The art of Terence, and Menander's fire;
Whose sense instructs us, and whose humour charms,
Whose judgment sways us, and whose spirit warms!
Oh, skilled in nature! see the hearts of swains,
Their artless passions, and their tender pains.

Now setting Phœbus shone serenely bright,
And fleecy clouds were streaked with purple light;
When tuneful Hylas, with melodious moan,
Taught rocks to weep, and made the mountains groan.

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
To Delia's ear the tender notes convey.
As some sad turtle his lost love deplores,
And with deep murmurs fills the sounding shores—
Thus, far from *Delia*, to the winds I mourn,
Alike, unheard, unpitied, and forlorn.

Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
For her, the feathered choirs neglect their song;
For her, the limes their pleasing shades deny;
For her, the lilies hang their heads and die,
Ye flowers that droop, forsaken by the spring;
Ye birds that, left by summer cease to sing;

Ye trees that fade when autumn heats remove,
Say, is not absence death to those who love?
Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
Cursed be the fields that cause my Delia's stay;
Fade every blossom, wither every tree,
Die every flower, and perish all but she.
What have I said? where'er my Delia flies,
Let spring attend, and sudden flowers arise;
Let opening roses knotted oaks adorn,
And liquid amber drop from every thorn.
Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
The birds shall cease to tune their evening song,
The winds to breathe, the waving woods to move,
And streams to murmur, e'er I cease to love.
Not bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,
Not balmy sleep to labourers faint with pain,
Not showers to larks, nor sunshine to the bee,
Are half so charming as thy sight to me.
Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs away!
Come, Delia, come; ah, why this long delay?
Through rocks and caves the name of Delia sounds;
Delia, each cave and echoing rock rebounds.
Ye powers, what pleasing frenzy soothes my mind!
Do lovers dream, or is my Delia kind?
She comes, my Delia comes!—Now cease my lay,
And cease, ye gales, to bear my sighs away!
Next Ægon sang, while Windsor groves admired;
Rehearse, ye Muses, what yourselves inspired.
Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strain!
Of perjured Doris, dying I complain:
Here where the mountains lessening as they rise
Lose the low vales, and steal into the skies:
While labouring oxen, spent with toil and heat,
In their loose traces from the field retreat:
While curling smokes from village-tops are seen,
And the fleet shades glide o'er the dusky green.

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
Beneath yon poplar oft we passed the day:
Oft on the rind I carved her amorous vows,
While she with garlands hung the bending boughs:
The garlands fade, the vows are worn away;
So dies her love, and so my hopes decay.

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strain!
Now bright Arcturus glads the teeming grain,
Now golden fruits on loaded branches shine,
And grateful clusters swell with floods of wine;
Now blushing berries paint the yellow grove;
Just gods! shall all things yield returns but love?

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
The shepherds cry, "Thy flocks are left a prey"—
Ah! what avails it me, the flocks to keep,
Who lost my heart while I preserved my sheep?
Pan came, and asked what magic caused my smart,
Or what ill eyes malignant glances dart?
What eyes but hers, alas! have power to move?
And is there magic but what dwells in love?

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strains!
I'll fly from shepherds, flocks, and flowery plains.—
From shepherds, flocks, and plains, I may remove,
Forsake mankind, and all the world—but love!
I know thee, love! on foreign mountains bred,
Wolves gave thee suck, and savage tigers fed.
Thou wert from Ætna's burning entrails torn,
Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born!

Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay!
Farewell, ye woods! adieu the light of day!
One leap from yonder cliff shall end my pains—
No more, ye hills, no more resound my strains!

Thus sung the shepherds till th' approach of night,
The skies yet blushing with departing light,
When falling dews with spangles decked the glade,
And the low sun had lengthened every shade.

WINTER.

THE FOURTH PASTORAL,

OR

DAPHNE.

To the Memory of Mrs. Tempest.

LYCIDAS.

Thyrsis, the music of that murmuring spring,
Is not so mournful as the strains you sing.
Nor rivers winding through the vales below
So sweetly warble, or so smoothly flow.
Now sleeping flocks on their soft fleeces lie,
The moon, serene in glory, mounts the sky,
While silent birds forget their tuneful lays,
Oh, sing of Daphne's fate, and Daphne's praise!

THYRSIS.

Behold the groves that shine with silver frost,
Their beauty withered, and their verdure lost.
Here shall I try the sweet Alexis' strain,
That called the list'ning Dryads to the plain?
Thames heard the numbers as he flowed along,
And bade his willows learn the moving song.

LYCIDAS.

So may kind rains their vital moisture yield,
And swell the future harvest of the field.
Begin; this charge the dying Daphne gave,
And said, "Ye shepherds, sing around my grave.
Sing, while beside the shaded tomb I mourn,
And with fresh bays her rural shrine adorn."

THYRSIS.

Ye gentle Muses, leave your crystal spring,
Let nymphs and sylvans cypress garlands bring;
Ye weeping loves, the stream with myrtles hide,

And break your bows, as when Adonis died ;
And with your golden darts, now useless grown,
Inscribe a verse on this relenting stone :
" Let nature change, let heaven and earth deplore,
Fair Daphne's dead, and love is now no more ! "
'Tis done, and nature's various charms decay
See gloomy clouds obscure the cheerful day !
Now hung with pearls the dropping trees appear,
Their faded honours scattered on her bier.
See where on earth the flowery glories lie,
With her they flourished, and with her they die.
Ah, what avail the beauties nature wore ?
Fair Daphne's dead, and beauty is no more !
For her the flocks refuse their verdant food,
Nor thirsty heifers seek the gliding flood.
The silver swans her hapless fate bemoan,
In notes more sad than when they sing their own ;
In hollow caves sweet Echo silent lies,
Silent, or only to her name replies ;
Her name with pleasure once she taught the shore—
Now Daphne's dead, and pleasure is no more !
No grateful dews descend from evening skies,
Nor morning odours from the flowers arise ;
No rich perfumes refresh the fruitful field,
Nor fragrant herbs their native incense yield.
The balmy zephyrs, silent since her death,
Lament the ceasing of a sweeter breath ;
Th' industrious bees neglect their golden store ;
Fair Daphne's dead, and sweetness is no more !
No more the mounting larks, while Daphne sings,
Shall listening in mid-air suspend their wings ;
No more the birds shall imitate her lays,
Or hushed with wonder, hearken from the sprays :
No more the streams their murmur shall forbear,
A sweeter music than their own to hear,
But tell the reeds, and tell the vocal shore,

Fair Daphne's dead, and music is no more!
Her fate is whispered by the gentle breeze,
And told in sighs to all the trembling trees;
The trembling trees, in every plain and wood,
Her fate re-murmur to the silver flood;
The silver flood, so lately calm, appears
Swelled with new passion, and o'erflows with tears;
The winds and trees and floods her death deplore,
Daphne, our grief! our glory now no more!
But see! where Daphne wondering mounts on high
Above the clouds, above the starry sky!
Eternal beauties grace the shining scene,
Fields ever fresh, and groves for ever green!
There while you rest in Amaranthine bowers,
Or from those meads select unfading flowers,
Behold us kindly, who your name implore,
Daphne, our goddess, and our grief no more!

LYCIDAS.

How all things listen, while thy Muse complains!
Such silence waits on Philomela's strains,
In some still evening, when the whispering breeze
Pants on the leaves, and dies upon the trees.
To thee, bright goddess, oft a lamb shall bleed,
If teeming ewes increase my fleecy breed.
While plants their shade, or flowers their odours give,
Thy name, thy honour, and thy praise shall live!

THYRSIS.

But see, Orion sheds unwholesome dews;
Arise! the pines a noxious shade diffuse;
Sharp Boreas blows, and Nature feels decay,
Time conquers all, and we must Time obey.
Adieu, ye vales, ye mountains, streams and groves;
Adieu, ye shepherd's rural lays and loves;
Adieu, my flocks; farewell, ye sylvan crew;
Daphne, farewell, and all the world adieu!

MESSIAH,

A SACRED ECLOGUE.

In Imitation of VIRGIL'S POLLIO.

Ye nymphs of Solyma! begin the song:
To heavenly themes sublimer strains belong.
The mossy fountains, and the sylvan shades,
The dreams of Pindus and th' Aonian maids,
Delight no more—O Thou my voice inspire
Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire!
Rapt into future times, the Bard begun:
A Virgin shall conceive, a Virgin bear a Son!
From Jesse's root behold a branch arise,
Whose sacred flower with fragrance fills the skies:
Th' ethereal spirit o'er its leaves shall move,
And on its top descends the mystic Dove.
Ye heavens! from high the dewy nectar pour,
And in soft silence shed the kindly shower!
The sick and weak the healing plant shall aid,
From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade.
All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail;
Returning Justice lift aloft her scale;
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed Innocence from heaven descend.
Swift fly the years, and rise th' expected morn!
Oh, spring to light, auspicious Babe, be born!
See Nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,
With all the incense of the breathing spring:
See lofty Lebanon his head advance,
See nodding forests on the mountains dance:
See spicy clouds from lowly Saron rise,
And Carmel's flowery top perfumes the skies!
Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers:

Prepare the way! a God, a God appears:
A God, a God! the vocal hills reply,
The rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity.
Lo, earth receives Him from the bending skies!
Sink down, ye mountains; and, ye valleys, rise;
With heads declined, ye cedars, homage pay;
Be smooth, ye rocks; ye rapid floods, give way!
The Saviour comes! by ancient bards foretold:
Hear Him, ye deaf; and all ye blind, behold!
He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day:
'Tis He th' obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
And bid new music charm th' unfolding ear:
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding roe.
No sigh, no murmur the wide world shall hear,
From every face He wipes off every tear.
In adamantine chains shall death be bound,
And hell's grim tyrant feel th' eternal wound.
As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,
Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,
Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,
By day o'ersees them, and by night protects,
The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms:
Thus shall mankind His guardian care engage,
The promised Father of the future age.
No more shall nation against nation rise,
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,
Nor fields with gleaming steel be covered o'er,
The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
And the broad falchion in a plough-share end.
Then palaces shall rise; the joyful son
Shall finish what his short-lived sire begun;
Their vines a shadow to their race shall yield,

And the same hand that sowed, shall reap the field.
The swain in barren deserts with surprise
See lilies spring, and sudden verdure rise ;
And starts, amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
New falls of water murmuring in his ear.
On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
The green reed trembles, and the bulrush nods.
Waste sandy valleys, once perplexed with thorn,
The spiry fir and shapely box adorn :
To leafless shrubs the flowering palms succeed,
And odorous myrtle to the noisome weed.
The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
And boys in flowery bands the tiger lead ;
The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
And harmless serpents lick the pilgrim's feet.
The smiling infant in his hand shall take
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
Pleased the green lustre of the scales survey,
And with their forky tongues shall innocently play.
Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise !
Exalt thy towery head, and lift thy eyes !
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn ;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies !
See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend ;
See thy bright altars thronged with prostrate kings,
And heaped with products of Sabæan springs !
For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.
See heaven its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day !
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,
Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn ;
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,

One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze
O'erflow thy courts : the light himself shall shine
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine !
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away ;
But fixed His word, His saving power remains—
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns !

WINDSOR FOREST.

TO THE

Right Honourable GEORGE, LORD LANSDOWN.

"Non injussa cano: Te nostræ, *Vare*, myricæ,
Te *Nemus* omne canet; nec Phœbo gratior ulla est
Quam sibi quæ *Vari* præscripsit pagina nomen."
VIRG., *Ecl.* vi. 10—12.

THY forests, Windsor! and thy green retreats,
At once the Monarch's and the Muse's seats,
Invite my lays. Be present, sylvan maids;
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.
Granville commands; your aid, O Muses, bring!
What Muse for Granville can refuse to sing?

The Groves of Eden, vanished now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspired with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again;
Not chaos-like together crushed and bruised,
But, as the world, harmoniously confused:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a chequered scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.

There interspersed in lawns and opening glades.
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend:
There wrapt in clouds the bluish hills ascend.
E'en the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And 'midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crowned with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,
Though gods assembled grace his towering height,
Than what more humble mountains offer here,
Where, in their blessings, all those gods appear.
See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crowned,
Here blushing Flora paints th' enamelled ground,
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns.
Not thus the land appeared in ages past,
A dreary desert, and a gloomy waste,
To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,
And kings more furious and severe than they;
Who claimed the skies, dispeopled air and floods,
The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:
Cities laid waste, they stormed the dens and caves
(For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves):
What could be free, when lawless beasts obeyed,
And e'en the elements a tyrant swayed?
In vain kind seasons swelled the teeming grain,
Soft showers distilled, and suns grew warm in vain;

The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,
And famished dies amidst his ripened fields.
What wonder then, a beast or subject slain
Were equal crimes in a despotic reign?
Both doomed alike, for sportive tyrants bled,
But while the subject starved, the beast was fed.
Proud Nimrod first the bloody chase began,
A mighty hunter, and his prey was man:
Our haughty Norman boasts that barbarous name,
And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.
The fields are ravished from th' industrious swains,
From men their cities, and from gods their fanes:
The levelled towns with weeds lie covered o'er;
The hollow winds through naked temples roar;
Round broken columns clasping ivy twined;
O'er heaps of ruin stalked the stately hind;
The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,
And savage howlings fill the sacred quires.
Awed by his nobles, by his commons cursed,
Th' oppressor ruled tyrannic where he durst,
Stretched o'er the poor and Church his iron rod,
And served alike his vassals and his God.
Whom e'en the Saxon spared, and bloody Dane,
The wanton victims of his sport remain.
But see, the man who spacious regions gave
A waste for beasts, himself denied a grave!
Stretched on the lawn his second hope survey,
At once the chaser, and at once the prey:
Lo, Rufus, tugging at the deadly dart,
Bleeds in the forest like a wounded hart.
Succeeding monarchs heard the subjects' cries,
Nor saw displeased the peaceful cottage rise.
Then gathering flocks on unknown mountains fed,
O'er sandy wilds were yellow harvests spread;
The forests wondered at th' unusual grain,
And secret transport touched the conscious swain.

Fair liberty, Britannia's goddess, rears
Her cheerful head, and leads the golden years.
Ye vigorous swains! while youth ferments your blood,
And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,
Now range the hills, the gameful woods beset,
Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net.
When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And in the new-shorn field the partridge feeds,
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds,
Panting with hope, he tries the furrowed grounds;
But when the tainted gales the game betray,
Crouched close he lies, and meditates the prey:
Secure they trust th' unfaithful field beset,
'Till hovering o'er them sweeps the swelling net.
Thus (if small things we may with great compare)
When Albion sends her eager sons to war,
Some thoughtless town, with ease and plenty blest,
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest;
Sudden they seize th' amazed, defenceless prize,
And high in air Britannia's standard flies.
See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.
Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?
Nor yet, when moist Arcturus clouds the sky,
The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny.
To plains with well-breathed beagles we repair,
And trace the mazes of the circling hare
(Beasts, urged by us, their fellow-beasts pursue,
And learn of man each other to undo).
With slaught'ring guns th' unwearied fowler roves,

When frosts have whitened all the naked groves ;
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,
And lonely wood-cocks haunt the watery glade.
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye ;
Straight a short thunder breaks the frozen sky :
Oft, as in airy rings they skim the heath,
The clamorous lapwings feel the leaden death :
Oft, as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little lives in air.

In genial spring, beneath the quivering shade,
Where cooling vapours breathe along the mead,
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand :
With looks unmoved, he hopes the scaly breed,
And eyes the dancing cork, and bending reed.
Our plenteous streams a various race supply :
The bright-eyed perch with fins of Tyrian dye,
The silver eel in shining volumes rolled,
The yellow carp in scales bedropped with gold,
Swift trouts diversified with crimson stains,
And pikes, the tyrants of the watery plains.

Now Cancer glows with Phœbus' fiery car :
The youth rush eager to the sylvan war,
Swarm o'er the lawns, the forest walks surround,
Rouse the fleet hart, and cheer the opening hound.
Th' impatient courser pants in every vein,
And, pawing, seems to beat the distant plain :
Hills, vales, and floods appear already crossed,
And ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.
See the bold youth strain up the threatening steep,
Rush through the thickets, down the valleys sweep,
Hang o'er their coursers' heads with eager speed,
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed.
Let old Arcadia boast her ample plain,
Th' immortal huntress, and her virgin train ;
Nor envy, Windsor ! since thy shades have seen

As bright a goddess, and as chaste a queen ;
Whose care, like hers, protects the sylvan reign,
The earth's fair light, and empress of the main.
Here too, 'tis sung, of old Diana strayed,
And Cynthus' top forsook for Windsor shade :
Here she was seen o'er airy wastes to rove,
Seek the clear spring, or haunt the pathless grove ;
Here armed with silver bows, in early dawn,
Her buskined virgins traced the dewy lawn.
Above the rest a rural nymph was famed,
Thy offspring, Thames ! the fair Lodona named
(Lodona's fate, in long oblivion cast,
The Muse shall sing, and what she sings shall last).
Scarce could the goddess from her nymph be known,
But by the crescent and the golden zone.
She scorned the praise of beauty, and the care :
A belt her waist, a fillet binds her hair ;
A painted quiver on her shoulder sounds,
And with her dart the flying deer she wounds.
It chanced, as eager of the chase, the maid
Beyond the forest's verdant limits strayed,
Pan saw and loved, and, burning with desire,
Pursued her flight ; her flight increased his fire.
Not half so swift the trembling doves can fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky ;
Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When through the clouds he drives the trembling doves ;
As from the god she flew with furious pace,
Or as the god, more furious, urged the chase.
Now fainting, sinking, pale, the nymph appears ;
Now close behind, his sounding steps she hears ;
And now his shadow reached her as she run,
His shadow lengthened by the setting sun ;
And now his shorter breath, with sultry air,
Pants on her neck, and fans her parting hair.

In vain on father Thames she calls for aid,
Nor could Diana help her injured maid.
Faint, breathless, thus she prayed, nor prayed in vain :
"Ah, Cynthia ! ah—though banished from thy train,
Let me, oh, let me to the shades repair,
My native shades—there weep, and murmur there,"
She said, and melting as in tears she lay,
In a soft, silver stream dissolved away.
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps ;
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,
And bathes the forest where she ranged before.
In her chaste current oft the goddess laves,
And with celestial tears augments the waves.
Oft in her glass the musing shepherd spies
The headlong mountains and the downward skies,
The watery landscape of the pendent woods,
And absent trees that tremble in the floods ;
In the clear azure gleam the flocks are seen,
And floating forests paint the waves with green ;
Through the fair scene roll slow the lingering streams,
Then foaming pour along, and rush into the Thames.
Thou, too, great father of the British floods !
With joyful pride survey'st our lofty woods,
Where towering oaks their growing honours rear,
And future navies on thy shores appear.
Not Neptune's self from all her streams receives
A wealthier tribute than to thine he gives.
No seas so rich, so gay no banks appear,
No lake so gentle, and no spring so clear.
Nor Po so swells the fabling poet's lays,
While led along the skies his current strays,
As thine, which visits Windsor's famed abodes,
To grace the mansion of our earthly gods :

Nor all his stars above a lustre show
Like the bright beauties on thy banks below,
Where Jove, subdued by mortal passion still,
Might change Olympus for a nobler hill.
Happy the man whom this bright court approves,
His sovereign favours, and his country loves:
Happy next him, who to these shades retires,
Whom nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires:
Whom humbler joys of home-felt quiet please,
Successive study, exercise, and ease.
He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,
And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields:
With chymic art exalts the mineral powers,
And draws the aromatic souls of flowers:
Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high;
O'er figured worlds now travels with his eye;
Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,
Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er:
Or wandering thoughtful in the silent wood,
Attends the duties of the wise and good,
T' observe a mean, be to himself a friend,
To follow nature, and regard his end;
Or looks on heaven with more than mortal eyes,
Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
Survey the region, and confess her home!
Such was the life great Scipio once admired:—
Thus Atticus, and Trumbull thus retired.
Ye sacred Nine! that all my soul possess,
Whose raptures fire me, and whose visions bless,
Bear me, oh, bear me to sequestered scenes,
The bowery mazes, and surrounding greens:
To Thames's banks, which fragrant breezes fill,
Or where ye Muses sport on Cooper's Hill.
(On Cooper's Hill eternal wreaths shall grow,
While lasts the mountain, or while Thames shall flow.)

I seem through consecrated walks to rove,
I hear soft music die along the grove :
Led by the sound, I roam from shade to shade,
By god-like poets venerable made :
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung ;
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue.
Oh, early lost ! what tears the river shed,
When the sad pomp along his banks was led ?
His drooping swans on every note expire,
And on his willows hung each Muse's lyre.

Since fate relentless stopped their heavenly voice,
No more the forests ring, or groves rejoice ;
Who now shall charm the shades where Cowley strung
His living harp, and lofty Denham sung !
But hark ! the groves rejoice, the forest rings !
Are these revived ? or is it Granville sings ?
'Tis yours, my Lord, to bless our soft retreats,
And call the Muses to their ancient seats ;
To paint anew the flowery sylvan scenes,
To crown the forests with immortal greens,
Make Windsor hills in lofty numbers rise,
And lift her turrets nearer to the skies ;
To sing those honours you deserve to wear,
And add new lustre to her silver star !

Here noble Surrey felt the sacred rage,
Surrey, the Granville of a former age :
Matchless his pen, victorious was his lance,
Bold in the lists, and graceful in the dance :
In the same shades the Cupids tuned his lyre,
To the same notes, of love, and soft desire :
Fair Geraldine, bright object of his vow,
Then filled the groves, as heavenly Mira now.

Oh, wouldst thou sing what heroes Windsor bore,
What kings first breathed upon her winding shore,
Or raise old warriors, whose adored remains

In weeping vaults her hallowed earth contains!
With Edward's acts adorn the shining page,
Stretch his long triumphs down through every age,
Draw monarchs chained, and Cressi's glorious field,
The lilies blazing on the regal shield:
Then, from her roofs when Verrio's colours fall,
And leave inanimate the naked wall;
Still in thy song should vanquished France appear,
And bleed for ever under Britain's spear.
Let softer strains ill-fated Henry mourn,
And palms eternal flourish round his urn.
Here o'er the martyr-king the marble weeps,
And, fast beside him, once-feared Edward sleeps:
Whom not the extended Albion could contain,
From old Belerium to the northern main,
The grave unites: where e'en the great find rest,
And blended lie the oppressor and the opprest!
Make sacred Charles's tomb for ever known
(Obscure the place, and uninscribed the stone),
Oh, fact accurst! what tears has Albion shed,
Heavens, what new wounds! and how her old have bled!
She saw her sons with purple deaths expire,
Her sacred domes involved in rolling fire,
A dreadful series of intestine wars,
Inglorious triumphs and dishonest scars.
At length great Anna said, "Let discord cease!"
She said! the world obeyed, and all was peace!
In that blest moment from his oozy bed
Old father Thames advanced his reverend head.
His tresses dropped with dews, and o'er the stream
His shining horns diffused a golden gleam:
Graved on his urn appeared the moon, that guides
His swelling waters and alternate tides;
The figured streams in waves of silver rolled,
And on their banks Augusta rose in gold.

Around his throne the sea-born brothers stood,
Who swell with tributary urns his flood;
First the famed authors of his ancient name,
The winding Isis, and the fruitful Thame:
The Kennet swift, for silver eels renowned;
The Loddon slow, with verdant alders crowned;
Cole, whose dark streams his flowery islands lave;
And chalky Wey, that rolls a milky wave;
The blue, transparent Vandalis appears;
The gulfy Lee his sedgy tresses rears;
And sullen Mole, that hides his diving flood;
And silent Darent, stained with Danish blood.

High in the midst, upon his urn reclined
(His sea-green mantle waving with the wind),
The god appeared: he turned his azure eyes
Where Windsor-domes and pompous turrets rise;
Then bowed and spoke; the winds forget to roar,
And the hushed waves glide softly to the shore.

Hail, sacred peace! hail, long-expected days,
That Thames's glory to the stars shall raise!
Though Tiber's streams immortal Rome behold,
Though foaming Hermus swells with tides of gold,
From heaven itself though sevenfold Nilus flows,
And harvests on a hundred realms bestows:
These now no more shall be the Muse's themes,
Lost in my fame, as in the sea their streams.
Let Volga's banks with iron squadrons shine,
And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine,
Let barbarous Ganges arm a servile train;
Be mine the blessings of a peaceful reign.
No more my sons shall dye with British blood
Red Iber's sands, or Ister's foaming flood:
Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
The shady empire shall retain no trace
Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chase;

The trumpet sleep, while cheerful horns are blown,
And arms employed on birds and beasts alone.
Behold! the ascending villas on my side
Project long shadows o'er the crystal tide.
Behold! Augusta's glittering spires increase,
And temples rise, the beauteous works of peace.
I see, I see, where two fair cities bend
Their ample bow, a new Whitehall ascend!
There mighty nations shall inquire their doom,
The world's great oracle in times to come;
There kings shall sue, and suppliant states be seen
Once more to bend before a BRITISH QUEEN.
Thy trees, fair Windsor! now shall leave their woods,
And half thy forests rush into thy floods,
Bear Britain's thunder, and her cross display,
To the bright regions of the rising day;
Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen pole:
Or under southern skies exalt their sails,
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales!
For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And Phœbus warm the ripening ore to gold.
The time shall come, when, free as seas or wind,
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind,
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And seas but join the regions they divide;
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tide,
And feathered people crowd my wealthy side,
And naked youths and painted chiefs admire
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire!
Oh, stretch thy reign, fair peace! from shore to shore,

Till conquest cease, and slavery be no more ;
Till the freed Indians in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves,
Peru once more a race of kings behold,
And other Mexicos be roofed with gold.
Exiled by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds shall barbarous discord dwell ;
Gigantic pride, pale terror, gloomy care,
And mad ambition, shall attend her there :
There purple vengeance bathed in gore retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires :
There hateful envy her own snakes shall feel,
And persecution mourn her broken wheel :
There faction roar, rebellion bite her chain,
And gasping furies thirst for blood in vain.

Here cease thy flight, nor with unhallowed lays
Touch the fair fame of Albion's golden days :
The thoughts of gods let Granville's verse recite,
And bring the scenes of opening fate to light.
My humble Muse, in unambitious strains,
Paints the green forests and the flowery plains,
Where peace descending bids her olives spring,
And scatters blessings from her dovelike wing.
Even I more sweetly pass my careless days,
Pleased in the silent shade with empty praise ;
Enough for me, that to the listening swains
First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.

ODE ON ST. CECILIA'S DAY.

MDCCVIII.

AND OTHER PIECES FOR MUSIC.

Ode for Music on St. Cecilia's Day.

I.

Descend, ye Nine! descend and sing;
The breathing instruments inspire,
Wake into voice each silent string,
And sweep the sounding lyre!
In a sadly-pleasing strain
Let the warbling lute complain:
Let the loud trumpet sound,
Till the roofs all around
The shrill echoes rebound:
While in more lengthened notes and slow,
The deep, majestic, solemn organs blow.
Hark! the numbers soft and clear,
Gently steal upon the ear;
Now louder, and yet louder rise,
And fill with spreading sounds the skies;
Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,
In broken air, trembling, the wild music floats;
Till, by degrees, remote and small,
The strains decay,
And melt away,
In a dying, dying fall.

II.

By music, minds an equal temper know,
Nor swell too high, nor sink too low.
If in the breast tumultuous joys arise,
Music her soft, assuasive voice applies;
Or when the soul is pressed with cares,

Exalts her in enlivening airs.
Warriors she fires with animated sounds;
Pours balm into the bleeding lover's wounds:
Melancholy lifts her head,
Morpheus rouses from his bed,
Sloth unfolds her arms and wakes,
Listening Envy drops her snakes:
Intestine war no more our passions wage,
And giddy factions hear away their rage.

III.

But when our country's cause provokes to arms,
How martial music every bosom warms?
So when the first bold vessel dared the seas,
High on the stern the Thracian raised his strain,
While Argo saw her kindred trees
Descend from Pelion to the main.
Transported demi-gods stood round,
And men grew heroes at the sound,
Enflamed with glory's charms:
Each chief his sevenfold shield displayed,
And half unsheathed the shining blade:
And seas, and rocks, and skies rebound,
To arms, to arms, to arms!

IV.

But when through all the infernal bounds
Which flaming Phlegethon surrounds,
Love, strong as death, the poet led
To the pale nations of the dead,
What sounds were heard,
What scenes appeared,
O'er all the dreary coasts!
Dreadful gleams,
Dismal screams,
Fires that glow,
Shrieks of woe,

Sullen moans,
Hollow groans,
And cries of tortured ghosts!
But hark! he strikes the golden lyre;
And see! the tortured ghosts respire,
See, shady forms advance!
Thy stone, O Sisyphus, stands still,
Ixion rests upon his wheel,
And the pale spectres dance!
The furies sink upon their iron beds,
And snakes uncurled hang listening round their heads.

V.

By the streams that ever flow,
By the fragrant winds that blow
O'er the Elysian flowers;
By those happy souls who dwell
In yellow meads of Asphodel,
Or Amaranthine bowers;
By the heroes armed shades,
Glittering through the gloomy glades,
By the youths that died for love,
Wandering in the myrtle grove,
Restore, restore Eurydice to life:
Oh, take the husband, or return the wife!

He sung, and hell consented
To hear the poet's prayer:
Stern Proserpine relented,
And gave him back the fair.
Thus song could prevail
O'er death, and o'er hell,
A conquest how hard and how glorious!
Though fate had fast bound her
With Styx nine times round her,
Yet music and love were victorious.

VI.

But soon, too soon, the lover turns his eyes:
Again she falls, again she dies, she dies!
How wilt thou now the fatal sisters move?
No crime was thine, if 'tis no crime to love.
Now under hanging mountains,
Beside the fall of fountains,
Or where Hebrus wanders,
Rolling in Mæanders,
All alone,
Unheard, unknown,
He makes his moan;
And calls her ghost,
For ever, ever, ever lost!
Now with furies surrounded,
Despairing, confounded,
He trembles, he glows,
Amidst Rhodope's snows;
See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies;
Hark! Hæmus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries—
Ah see, he dies!
Yet even in death Eurydice he sung,
Eurydice still trembled on his tongue,
Eurydice the woods,
Eurydice the floods,
Eurydice the rocks, and hollow mountains rung.

VII.

Music the fiercest grief can charm,
And fate's severest rage disarm:
Music can soften pain to ease,
And make despair and madness please:
Our joys below it can improve,
And antedate the bliss above.
This the divine Cecilia found,

And to her Maker's praise confined the sound.
When the full organ joins the tuneful choir,
  The immortal powers incline their ear,
Borne on the swelling notes our souls aspire,
While solemn airs improve the sacred fire ;
  And angels lean from heaven to hear.
Of Orpheus now no more let poets tell,
To bright Cecilia greater power is given ;
  His numbers raised a shade from hell,
    Hers lift the soul to heaven.

TWO CHORUSES
TO THE TRAGEDY OF BRUTUS.

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.

STROPHE I.

Ye shades, where sacred truth is sought;
Groves, where immortal sages taught;
Where heavenly visions Plato fired,
And Epicurus lay inspired!
In vain your guiltless laurels stood
Unspotted long with human blood.
War, horrid war, your thoughtful walks invades,
And steel now glitters in the Muses' shades.

ANTISTROPHE I.

O heaven-born sisters! source of art!
Who charm the sense, or mend the heart;
Who lead fair Virtue's train along,
Moral Truth, and mystic Song!
To what new clime, what distant sky,
Forsaken, friendless, shall ye fly?
Say, will you bless the bleak Atlantic shore?
Or bid the furious Gaul be rude no more?

STROPHE II.

When Athens sinks by fates unjust,
When wild barbarians spurn her dust;
Perhaps e'en Britain's utmost shore
Shall cease to blush with stranger's gore,
See Arts her savage sons control,
And Athens rising near the pole!
Till some new tyrant lifts his purple hand,
And civil madness tears them from the land.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Ye gods! what justice rules the ball?
Freedom and Arts together fall;
Fools grant whate'er Ambition craves,
And men, once ignorant, are slaves.
Oh, cursed effects of civil hate,
In every age, in every state!
Still, when the lust of tyrant power succeeds,
Some Athens perishes, some Tully bleeds.

CHORUS OF YOUTHS AND VIRGINS.

SEMICHORUS.

O TYRANT Love! hast thou possest
The prudent, learned, and virtuous breast?
Wisdom and wit in vain reclaim,
And Arts but soften us to feel thy flame.
Love, soft intruder, enters here,
But ent'ring learns to be sincere.
Marcus with blushes owns he loves,
And Brutus tenderly reproves.
Why, Virtue, dost thou blame desire,
Which Nature has imprest?
Why, Nature, dost thou soonest fire
The mild and generous breast?

CHORUS.

Love's purer flames the gods approve;
The gods and Brutus bend to love:
Brutus for absent Portia sighs,
And sterner Cassius melts at Junia's eyes.
What is loose love? a transient gust,
Spent in a sudden storm of lust,
A vapour fed from wild desire,
A wandering, self-consuming fire,

But Hymen's kinder flames unite ;
And burn for ever one ;
Chaste as cold Cynthia's virgin light,
Productive as the sun.

SEMICHORUS.

O source of every social tie,
United wish, and mutual joy !
What various joys on one attend,
As son, as father, brother, husband, friend ?
Whether his hoary sire he spies,
While thousand grateful thoughts arise ;
Or meets his spouse's fonder eye ;
Or views his smiling progeny ;
What tender passions take their turns,
What home-felt raptures move ?
His heart now melts, now leaps, now burns,
With reverence, hope, and love.

CHORUS.

Hence guilty joys, distastes, surmises,
Hence false tears, deceits, disguises,
Dangers, doubts, delays, surprises ;
Fires that scorch, yet dare not shine
Purest love's unwasting treasure,
Constant faith, fair hope, long leisure,
Days of ease, and nights of pleasure ;
Sacred Hymen ! these are thine.

ODE ON SOLITUDE.

HAPPY the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcernedly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mixed; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL.

[WRITTEN 1712.]

ODE.

I.

VITAL spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, oh, quit this mortal frame:
  Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
  Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

II.

Hark! they whisper; Angels say,
Sister spirit, come away.
  What is this absorbs me quite?
  Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

III.

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
  With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O grave! where is thy victory?
  O death! where is thy sting?

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But, of the two, less dangerous is th' offence
To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;
A fool might once himself alone expose,
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.
'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
In poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the critic's share;
Both must alike from Heaven derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel,
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not critics to their judgment too?
Yet if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimmering light;
The lines, tho' touched but faintly, are drawn right.
But as the slightest sketch, if justly traced,
Is by ill-colouring but the more disgraced,
So by false learning is good sense defaced;
Some are bewildered in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools.
In search of wit these lose their common sense,
And then turn critics in their own defence:

Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write,
Or with a rival's or an eunuch's spite.
All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.
If Mævius scribble in Apollo's spite,
There are who judge still worse than he can write.
Some have at first for wits, then poets passed,
Turned critics next, and proved plain fools at last.
Some neither can for wits nor critics pass,
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
Those half-learned witlings, numerous in our isle,
As half-formed insects on the banks of Nile ;
Unfinished things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation 's so equivocal :
To tell them, would a hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.
But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste, and learning go ;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.
Nature to all things fixed the limits fit,
And wisely curbed proud man's pretending wit.
As on the land while here the ocean gains,
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains ;
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails ;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.
One science only will one genius fit ;
So vast is art, so narrow human wit :
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confined to single parts.
Like kings we lose the conquests gained before,
By vain ambition still to make them more ;

Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.
First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same :
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides :
In some fair body thus the informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigour fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and every nerve sustains ;
Itself unseen, but in the effects, remains.
Some, to whom Heaven in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more, to turn it to its use ;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.
'Tis more to guide, than spur the Muse's steed ;
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed ;
The winged courser, like a generous horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.
Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodised ;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrained
By the same laws which first herself ordained.
Hear how learned Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress, and when indulge our flights :
High on Parnassus' top her sons she showed,
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod ,
Held from afar, aloft, the immortal prize,
And urged the rest by equal steps to rise.
Just precepts thus from great examples given,
She drew from them what they derived from Heaven.
The generous critic fanned the poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.

Then criticism the Muses' handmaid proved,
To dress her charms, and make her more beloved:
But following wits from that intention strayed,
Who could not win the mistress, wooed the maid;
Against the poets their own arms they turned,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learned.
So modern 'pothecaries, taught the art
By doctor's bills to play the doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.
Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,
Nor time nor moths e'er spoiled so much as they.
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts how poems may be made.
These leave the sense, their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.

You, then, whose judgment the right course would steer,
Know well each ancient's proper character;
His fable, subject, scope in every page;
Religion, country, genius of his age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticise.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring.
Still with itself compared, his text peruse;
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.

When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work t' outlast immortal Rome designed,
Perhaps he seemed above the critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorned to draw:
But when t' examine every part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.

Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design;
And rules as strict his laboured work confine,
As if the Stagirite o'erlooked each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy nature is to copy them.

Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resembles poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend,
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky licence answer to the full
The intent proposed, that licence is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which without passing through the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend.
But tho' the ancients thus their rules invade,
(As kings dispense with laws themselves have made)
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its end;
Let it be seldom and compelled by need;
And have, at least, their precedent to plead.
The critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.

I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts
Those freer beauties, e'en in them, seem faults.
Some figures monstrous and mis-shaped appear,

Considered singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportioned to their light or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.
A prudent chief not always must display
His powers in equal ranks, and fair array.
But with the occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, nay, seem sometimes to fly.
Those oft are stratagems which error seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.
Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive war, and all-involving age.
See, from each clime the learned their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues, consenting pæans ring!
In praise so just let every voice be joined,
And fill the general chorus of mankind.
Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days;
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
Oh, may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire.
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights;
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)
To teach vain wits a science little known,
T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is *pride*, the never-failing voice of fools.
Whatever nature has in worth denied,
She gives in large recruits of needful pride;

For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swelled with wind :
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself ; but your defects to know,
Make use of every friend—and every foe.

A *little learning* is a dangerous thing ;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring :
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind ;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise !
So pleased at first the tow'ring Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last ;
But, those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labours of the lengthened way,
Th' increasing prospects tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise !

A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ :
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind ;
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The generous pleasure to be charmed with wit.
But in such lays as neither ebb, nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep ;
We cannot blame indeed——but we may sleep.

In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts ;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well-proportioned dome,
(The world's just wonder, and e'en thine, O Rome !)
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to th' admiring eyes ;
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear ;
The whole at once is bold, and regular.

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend ;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due ;
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
T' avoid great errors, must the less commit :
Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,
For not to know some trifles, is a praise.
Most critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the whole depend upon a part :
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one loved folly sacrifice.

Once on a time, La Mancha's knight, they say,
A certain bard encountering on the way,
Discoursed in terms as just, with looks as sage,
As e'er could Dennis of the Grecian stage ;
Concluding all were desperate sots and fools,
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.
Our author, happy in a judge so nice,
Produced his play, and begged the Knight's advice ;
Made him observe the subject, and the plot,
The manners, passions, unities ; what not ?
All which, exact to rule, were brought about,
Were but a combat in the lists left out.

"What! leave the combat out?" exclaims the
Knight;
Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite.
"Not so, by Heaven" (he answers in a rage),
"Knights, squires, and steeds, must enter on the
stage."
So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain.
"Then build a new, or act it in a plain."
Thus critics, of less judgment than caprice,
Curious not knowing, not exact but nice,
Form short ideas; and offend in arts
(As most in manners) by a love to parts.
Some to *conceit* alone their taste confine,
And glittering thoughts struck out at every line;
Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets like painters, thus, unskilled to trace
The naked Nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art
True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;
Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness set off sprightly wit.
For works may have more wit than does them good,
As bodies perish thro' excess of blood.
Others for *language* all their care express,
And value books, as women, men, for dress:
Their praise is still,—the style is excellent:
The sense, they humbly take upon content,
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found,
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colours spreads on every place;

The face of Nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay :
But true expression, like th' unchanging sun
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable ;
A vile conceit in pompous words expressed,
Is like a clown in regal purple dressed :
For different styles with different subjects sort,
As several garbs with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense ;
Such laboured nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze th' unlearned, and make the learned smile.
Unlucky, as Fungoso in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display,
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday ;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires, in their doublets drest.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold ;
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old :
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

But most by numbers judge a poet's song ;
And smooth or rough, with them is right or wrong :
In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire ;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds ; as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire ;
While expletives their feeble aid do join ;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line :
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,

With sure returns of still expected rhymes ;
Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees ;"
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep,"
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with "sleep :"
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length
along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth or languishingly slow ;
And praise the easy vigour of a line,
Where Denham's strength, and Waller's sweetness
join.
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense :
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows ;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar :
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw
The line too labours, and the words move slow ;
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the
main.
Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise !
While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love,
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow :
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdued by sound !

The power of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.
Avoid extremes ; and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense ;
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move ;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve :
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.
Some foreign writers, some our own despise ;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize.
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied
To one small sect, and all are damned beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes ;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last ;
Though each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not then if wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true.
Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the town ;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with quality.
A constant critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord.

What woeful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starved hackney sonneteer, or me?
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens; how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!
The vulgar thus through imitation err;
As oft the learned by being singular;
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong;
So schismatics the plain believers quit,
And are but damned for having too much wit.
Some praise at morning what they blame at night;
But always think the last opinion right.
A muse by these is like a mistress used,
This hour she's idolised, the next abused;
While their weak heads like towns unfortified,
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.
Ask them the cause; they're wiser still, they say;
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow,
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.
Once school-divines this zealous isle o'erspread;
Who knew most sentences, was deepest read;
Faith, Gospel, all seemed made to be disputed,
And none had sense enough to be confuted:
Scotists and Thomists, now in peace remain,
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck Lane.
If faith itself has different dresses worn,
What wonder modes in wit should take their turn?
Oft leaving what is natural and fit,
The current folly proves the ready wit;
And authors think their reputation safe,
Which lives as long as fools are pleased to laugh.
Some valuing those of their own side or mind,
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:

Fondly we think we honour merit then,
When we but praise ourselves in other men.
Parties in wit attend on those of State,
And public faction doubles private hate.
Pride, malice, folly, against Dryden rose,
In various shapes of parsons, critics, beaus ;
But sense survived, when merry jests were past ;
For rising merit will buoy up at last.
Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise :
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
Zoilus again would start up from the dead.
Envy will merit, as its shade pursue ;
But like a shadow, proves the substance true ;
For envied wit, like sol eclipsed, makes known
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own.
When first that sun too powerful beams displays,
It draws up vapours which obscure its rays ;
But e'en those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories, and augment the day.
Be thou the first true merit to befriend ;
His praise is lost, who stays, till all commend.
Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that golden age appears,
When patriarch-wits survived a thousand years :
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all e'en that can boast ;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be.
So when the faithful pencil has designed
Some bright idea of the master's mind,
Where a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready nature waits upon his hand ;
When the ripe colours soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light ;

When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live,
The treacherous colours the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!

Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings.
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-lived vanity is lost:
Like some fair flower the early spring supplies,
That gaily blooms, but e'en in blooming dies.
What is this wit, which must our cares employ?
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy;
Then most our trouble still when most admired,
And still the more we give, the more required;
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;
'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone!

If wit so much from ignorance undergo,
Ah, let not learning too commence its foe!
Of old, those met rewards who could excel,
And such were praised who but endeavoured well:
Though triumphs were to generals only due,
Crowns were reserved to grace the soldiers too.
Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools:
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill author is as bad a friend.
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise!
Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the critic let the man be lost.
Good-nature and good-sense must ever join;
To err is human, to forgive, divine.

But if in noble minds some dregs remain
Not yet purged off, of spleen and sour disdain ;
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.
No pardon vile obscenity should find,
Though wit and art conspire to move your mind ;
But dulness with obscenity must prove
As shameful sure as impotence in love.
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,
Sprung the rank weed, and thrived with large increase :
When love was all an easy Monarch's care ;
Seldom at council, never in a war :
Jilts ruled the state, and statesmen farces writ ;
Nay wits had pensions, and young lords had wit :
The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
And not a mask went unimproved away :
The modest fan was lifted up no more,
And virgins smiled at what they blushed before.
The following licence of a foreign reign
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus drain ;
Then unbelieving priests reformed the nation,
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation ;
Where heaven's free subjects might their rights dispute,
Lest God himself should seem too absolute :
Pulpits their sacred satire learned to spare
And vice admired to find a flatterer there !
Encouraged thus, wit's Titans braved the skies,
And the press groaned with licensed blasphemies.
These monsters, critics ! with your darts engage,
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage !
Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice ;
All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

Learn, then, what morals critics ought to show,
For 'tis but half a judge's task, to know.
'Tis not enough, taste, judgment, learning, join ;
In all you speak, let truth and candour shine :
That not alone what to your sense is due
All may allow ; but seek your friendship too.

Be silent always when you doubt your sense ;
And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence :
Some positive, persisting fops we know,
Who, if once wrong, will needs be always so ·
But you, with pleasure own your errors past,
And make each day a critic on the last.

'Tis not enough, your counsel still be true ;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do ;
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.
Without good breeding, truth is disapproved ;
That only makes superior sense beloved.

Be niggards of advice on no pretence ;
For the worst avarice is that of sense,
With mean complacence ne'er betray your trust,
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.
Fear not the anger of the wise to raise ;
Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise

'Twere well might critics still this freedom take
But Appius reddens at each word you speak
And stares, tremendous, with a threatening eye
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.
Fear most to tax an honourable fool,
Whose right it is uncensured to be dull.
Such, without wit, are poets when they please.
As without learning they can take degrees.
Leave dangerous truths to unsuccessful satires,
And flattery to fulsome dedicators,
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more,
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er.

'Tis best sometimes your censure to restrain,
And charitably let the dull be vain :
Your silence there is better than your spite,
For who can rail so long as they can write ?
Still humming on, their drowsy course they keep,
And lashed so long, like tops, are lashed asleep.
False steps but help them to renew the race,
As, after stumbling, jades will mend their pace.
What crowds of these, impenitently bold,
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,
Still run on poets, in a raging vein,
Even to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,
And rhyme with all the rage of impotence.
Such shameless bards we have ; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad abandoned critics too.
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head,
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
And always listening to himself appears.
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,
From Dryden's Fables down to Durfey's Tales.
With him, most authors steal their works, or buy ;
Garth did not write his own Dispensary.
Name a new play, and he's the poet's friend,
Nay showed his faults—but when would poets mend ?
No place so sacred from such fops is barred,
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's church yard :
Nay, fly to altars ; there they 'll talk you dead :
For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
It still looks home, and short excursions makes ;
But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,
And never shocked, and never turned aside,
Bursts out, resistless, with a thundering tide.

But where 's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbiassed, or by favour, or by spite;
Not dully prepossessed, nor blindly right;
Though learned, well-bred; and though well-bred sincere,
Modestly bold, and humanly severe:
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined;
A knowledge both of books and human kind:
Generous converse; a soul exempt from pride;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?
Such once were critics; such the happy few,
Athens and Rome in better ages knew.
The mighty Stagirite first left the shore,
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore:
He steered securely, and discovered far,
Led by the light of the Mæonian star.
Poets, a race long unconfined, and free,
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,
Received his laws; and stood convinced 'twas fit,
Who conquered nature, should preside o'er wit.
Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
And without method talks us into sense,
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
The truest notions in the easiest way.
He who, supreme in judgment, as in wit,
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
Yet judged with coolness, though he sung with fire;
His precepts teach but what his works inspire.
Our critics take a contrary extreme,
They judge with fury, but they write with fle'me:
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong translations
By wits, than critics in as wrong quotations.
See Dionysius Homer's thoughts refine,

And call new beauties forth from every line!
Fancy and art in gay Petronius please,
The scholar's learning, with the courtier's ease.
In grave Quintilian's copious work, we find
The justest rules, and clearest method joined:
Thus useful arms in magazines we place,
All ranged in order, and disposed with grace,
But less to please the eye, than arm the hand,
Still fit for use, and ready at command.
Thee, bold Longinus! all the nine inspire,
And bless their critic with a poet's fire.
An ardent judge, who, zealous in his trust,
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;
Whose own example strengthens all his laws;
And is himself that great sublime he draws.
Thus long succeeding critics justly reigned,
Licence repressed, and useful laws ordained.
Learning and Rome alike in empire grew;
And arts still followed where her eagles flew:
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw learning fall, and Rome.
With tyranny, then superstition joined,
As that the body, this enslaved the mind;
Much was believed, but little understood,
And to be dull was construed to be good;
A second deluge learning thus o'errun,
And the monks finished what the Goths begun.
At length Erasmus, that great injured name,
(The glory of the priesthood, and the shame!)
Stemmed the wild torrent of a barbarous age,
And drove those holy Vandals off the stage.
But see! each muse, in Leo's golden days,
Starts from her trance, and trims her withered bays.
Rome's ancient genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his reverend head.
Then sculpture and her sister-arts revive:

Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live ;
With sweeter notes each rising temple rung ;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung.
Immortal Vida : on whose honoured brow
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow :
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame !
But soon by impious arms from Latium chased,
Their ancient bounds the banished muses passed ;
Thence arts o'er all the northern world advance,
But critic-learning flourished most in France :
The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys ;
And Boileau still in right of Horace sways.
But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised,
And kept unconquered, and uncivilised ;
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defied the Romans, as of old.
Yet some there were, among the sounder few
Of those who less presumed, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,
And here restored wit's fundamental laws.
Such was the muse, whose rules and practice tell,
"Nature's chief master-piece is writing well."
Such was Roscommon, not more learned than good,
With manners generous as his noble blood ;
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And every author's merit, but his own.
Such late was Walsh—the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or to commend ;
To failings mild, but zealous for desert ;
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.
This humble praise, lamented shade ! receive,
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give :
The Muse, whose early voice you taught to sing,
Prescribed her heights, and pruned her tender wing,
(Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,

But in low numbers short excursions tries :
Content, if hence the unlearned their wants may view,
The learned reflect on what before they knew :
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame ;
Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame.
Averse alike to flatter, or offend ;
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM.

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis. MART. [*Epigr.* xii. 84.]

TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMOR.

MADAM,—It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to you. Yet you may bear me witness it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh, not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offered to a bookseller, you had the good-nature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct. This I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The machinery, madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the deities, angels, or dæmons are made to act in a poem, for the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies, let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a Lady, but 'tis so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *Le Comte de Cabalis*, which, both in its title and size, is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by spirits, which they call sylphs, gnomes, nymphs, and salamanders. The gnomes or dæmons of earth delight in mischief; but the sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are the best-conditioned creatures imaginable. For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, an inviolate preservation of chastity.

As to the following cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous,

as the vision at the beginning, or the transformation at the end; (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person, or in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass through the world half so uncensured as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, madam,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A. POPE.

CANTO I.

WHAT dire offence from amorous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing—This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due:
This, e'en Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
Oh, say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest:
'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed
The morning dream that hovered o'er her head:
A youth more glittering than a birth-night beau,
(That e'en in slumber caused her cheek to glow)
Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay.

And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say.
Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!
If e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught;
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by angel powers,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heavenly flowers;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride concealed,
To maids alone and children are revealed:
What though no credit doubting wits may give?
The fair and innocent shall still believe.
Know, then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky:
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box, and hover round the ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once enclosed in woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive,
And love of ombre, after death survive.
For when the fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire:
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
Mount up and take a salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,

And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

Know further yet, whoever fair and chaste,
Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embraced :
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treacherous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires ?
'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though honour is the word with men below.
Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestined to the gnomes' embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride.
When offers are disdained, and love denied :
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, your grace salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau.

Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball ?
When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,

If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from every part,
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals levity may call;
Oh, blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all.
Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But Heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warned by the sylph, O pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of man!
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;
Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanished from thy head.
And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here,
The various offerings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

CANTO II.

Not with more glories in the ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-dressed youths around her shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.
Her lively looks a spritely mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you 'll forget them all.

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes, we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
Propitious Heaven, and every power adored,
But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;
And all the trophies of his former loves:
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,
The rest, the winds dispersed in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the sylph—with careful thoughts opprest,
The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.

He summons straight his denizens of air ;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair :
Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe,
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold ;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While every beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head was Ariel placed ;
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun.
Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear !
Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and dæmons, hear !
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned
By laws eternal to the aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth, o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide :
Of these the Chief, the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.

Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care ;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale ;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers ;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in showers,
A brighter wash ; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs ;
Nay, oft in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.

This day black omens threat the brightest fair,
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care ;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or sleight ;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail china jar receive a flaw ;
Or stain her honour or her new brocade ;
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade ;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball ;
Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye spirits ! to your charge repair ;
The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care ;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign ;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine ;
Do thou, Crispissa, attend her favourite lock ;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat :
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail.
Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale ;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins ;

Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye :
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain.
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain ;
Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a riveled flower :
Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below !

He spoke ; the spirits from the sails descend ;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend :
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair ;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear ;
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

CANTO III.

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers.
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighbouring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home ;
Here thou, great Anna ! whom three realms obey,
Doth sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court ;
In various talk the instructive hours they past.
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last ;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen ;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes ;
At every word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that.*

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray ;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine ;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,
At ombre singly to decide their doom ;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card :
First, Ariel perched upon a Matadore,
Then each, according to the rank they bore ;
For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
Behold, four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard ;
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain a flower,
The expressive emblem of their softer power ;
Four Knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand ;
And particoloured troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skilful nymph reviews her force with care :
Let Spades be trumps ! she said, and trumps they were.
Now moved to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable lord !
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And marched a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.

With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,
The rest, his many-coloured robe concealed.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
E'en mighty Pam, that Kings and Queens o'erthrew,
And mowed down armies in the fights of Loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguished by the victor Spade!
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
The imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim dyed,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barbarous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroidered King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with powers combined,
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.
Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierc'd battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;

She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.
And now (as oft in some distempered state)
On one nice trick depends the general fate,
An ace of Hearts steps forth ; the King unseen
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive Queen :
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky ;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.

Oh thoughtless mortals ! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honours shall be snatched away,
And cursed for ever this victorious day.

For lo ! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round ;
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp ; the fiery spirits blaze :
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide :
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band ;
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain
New stratagems the radiant lock to gain.
Ah, cease, rash youth ! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate !
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair !

But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill !

Just then Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case :
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends ;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread.
As o'er the fragrant steam she bends her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
A thousand wings by turns blow back the hair ;
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear ;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought ;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired.
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.

The peer now spreads the glitt'ring forfex wide,
T' inclose the lock ; now joins it, to divide.
E'en then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched sylph too fondly interposed ;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever !

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last ;
Or when rich China vessels, fallen from high,
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie !

Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine.
(The victor cried) the glorious prize is mine !

While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!
What Time would spare, from steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel,
The conquering force of unresisted steel?

CANTO IV.

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
And secret passions laboured in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau 's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad virgin, for thy ravished hair.
For, that sad moment, when the sylphs withdrew
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repaired to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,
And in a vapour reached the dismal dome.

No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded east is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne, alike in place,
But differing far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
With store of prayers, for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is filled; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant vapour o'er the palace flies;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires:
Now lakes of liquid gold, elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.
Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen,
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod, walks;
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie talks;
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,
And maids, turned bottles, call aloud for corks.

Safe past the gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing Spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the power: "Hail, wayward queen!
Who rule the sex, to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is that all thy power disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease:
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen."
The goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his prayer.
A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.
Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected and her hair unbound.

Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cried,
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" replied)
"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,
For this with torturing irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs.
(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,

And thus broke out—"My lord, why, what the devil?
Z—ds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair," he spoke, and rapped his box.
"It grieves me much," replied the peer again,
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.

But Umbriel, hateful gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half languishing, half drowned in tears;
On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she raised; and thus she said:
"For ever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my favourite curl away!
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of Courts to numerous ills betrayed.
Oh, had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle or distant Northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea!
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?
Oh, had I stayed, and said my prayers at home!
'Twas this, the morning omens seemed to tell,

Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell ;
The tottering china shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind !
A sylph, too, warned me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believed too late !
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs !
My hands shall rend what e'en thy rapine spares :
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck ;
The sister lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own ;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more, thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh hadst thou, cruel ! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these ! "

CANTO V.

She said : the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopped the baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails ?
Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan ;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began :
" Say, why are beauties praised and honoured most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast ?
Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored ?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved beaux,
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows ;
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains :
That men may say, when we the front-box grace :
'Behold the first in virtue as in face ! '
Oh ! if to dance all night, and dress all day,

Charmed the small-pox, or chased old age away ;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use ?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas ! frail beauty must decay,
Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to grey ;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man must die a maid ;
What then remains but well our power to use,
And keep good humour still whate'er we lose ?
And trust me, dear ! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll ;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."
So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued ;
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude.
" To arms, to arms ! " the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack ;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack ;
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,
And heavenly breasts with human passions rage ;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars ; Latona, Hermes arms ;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms :
Jove's thunder roars, heaven trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound ;
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day !
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clapped his glad wings, and sat to view the fight :

Propped on their bodkin spears, the sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witling perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing"—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies
The expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepped in and killed him with a frown;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side:
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor feared the chief the unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold lord with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The gnomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
Now meet thy fate, incensed Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great great grandsire wore about his neck,

In three seal-rings ; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown :
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew ;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)
"Boast not my fall," he cried, "insulting foe !
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low,
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind :
All that I dread is leaving you behind !
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."
"Restore the lock !" she cries ; and all around
"Restore the lock !" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost !
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
In every place is sought, but sought in vain :
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So Heaven decrees ! with Heaven who can contest ?
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.
There heroes' wits are kept in ponderous vases,
And beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer cases.
There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,
And lover's hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's prayers,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes :
(So Rome's great founder to the heavens withdrew,
To Proculus alone confessed in view)

A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
The heavens bespangling with dishevelled light.
The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.
This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes ;
And hence the egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright nymph, to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere !
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die :
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

ELEGY

TO THE

MEMORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE LADY.

WHAT beckoning ghost, along the moonlight shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?
'Tis she!—but why that bleeding bosom gored,
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
Oh, ever beautous, ever friendly! tell,
Is it in heaven a crime to love too well?
To bear too tender, or too firm a heart,
To act a lover's or a Roman's part?
Is there no bright reversion in the sky,
For those who greatly think, or bravely die?
Why bade ye else, ye powers! her soul aspire
Above the vulgar flight of low desire?
Ambition first sprung from your blest abodes;
The glorious fault of angels and of gods;
Thence to their images on earth it flows,
And in the breasts of kings and heroes glows.
Most souls, 'tis true, but peep out once an age,
Dull sullen prisoners in the body's cage:
Dim lights of life, that burn a length of years
Useless, unseen, as lamps in sepulchres;
Like Eastern kings a lazy state they keep,
And close confined to their own palace, sleep.
From these perhaps (ere nature bade her die)
Fate snatched her early to the pitying sky.
As into air the purer spirits flow,
And separate from their kindred dregs below;
So flew the soul to its congenial place,
Nor left one virtue to redeem her race.

But thou, false guardian of a charge too good,
Thou, mean deserter of thy brother's blood!
See on these ruby lips the trembling breath,
These cheeks now fading at the blast of death:
Cold is that breast which warmed the world before.
And those love-darting eyes must roll no more.
Thus if eternal justice rules the ball,
Thus shall your wives, and thus your children fall;
On all the line a sudden vengeance waits,
And frequent hearses shall besiege your gates.
There passengers shall stand, and pointing say,
(While the long funerals blacken all the way)
Lo these were they, whose souls the furies steeled,
And cursed with hearts unknowing how to yield.
Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageant of a day!
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learned to glow
For others' good, or melt at others' woe.
What can atone (O ever-injured shade!)
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?
No friend's complaint no kind domestic tear
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier.
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned!
What though no friends in sable weeds appear,
Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,
And bear about the mockery of woe
To midnight dances, and the public show?
What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,
Nor polished marble emulate thy face?
What though no sacred earth allow thee room,
Nor hallowed dirge be muttered o'er thy tomb?
Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be drest
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast:

There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow ;
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade
The ground, now sacred by thy relics made.
So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.
How loved, how honoured once, avails thee not.
To whom related, or by whom begot ;
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be !
Poets themselves must fall, like those they sung,
Deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue.
E'en he whose soul now melts in mournful lays,
Shall shortly want the generous tear he pays ;
Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart,
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The muse forgot and thou be loved no more !

PROLOGUE

TO

MR. ADDISON'S TRAGEDY OF CATO.

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart ;
To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold :
For this the tragic muse first trod the stage,
Commanding tears to stream through every age ;
Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wondered how they wept.
Our author shuns by vulgar springs to move
The hero's glory, or the virgin's love ;
In pitying Love, we but our weakness show,
And wild ambition well deserves its woe.
Here tears shall flow from a more generous cause,
Such tears as patriots shed for dying laws :
He bids your breasts with ancient ardour rise,
And calls forth Roman drops from British eyes.
Virtue confessed in human shape he draws,
What Plato thought, and godlike Cato was :
No common object to your sight displays,
But what with pleasure Heaven itself surveys,
A brave man struggling in the storms of fate,
And greatly falling, with a falling state.
While Cato gives his little senate laws,
What bosom beats not in his country's cause ?
Who sees him act, but envies every deed ?
Who hears him groan, and does not wish to bleed ?
E'en when proud Cæsar 'midst triumphal cars,
The spoils of nations, and the pomp of wars,
Ignobly vain and impotently great,
Showed Rome her Cato's figure drawn in state ;

As her dead father's reverend image past,
The pomp was darkened, and the day o'ercast ;
The triumph ceased, tears gushed from every eye,
The world's great victor passed unheeded by ;
Her last good man dejected Rome adored,
And honoured Cæsar less than Cato's sword.
Britons, attend : be worth like this approved,
And show you have the virtue to be moved.
With honest scorn the first famed Cato viewed
Rome learning arts from Greece, whom she subdued ;
Your scene precariously subsists too long
On French translation, and Italian song.
Dare to have sense yourselves ; assert the stage,
Be justly warmed with your own native rage :
Such plays alone should win a British ear
As Cato's self had not disdained to hear.

TRANSLATIONS AND IMITATIONS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The following translations were selected from many others done by the author in his youth; for the most part indeed but a sort of *Exercises*, while he was improving himself in the languages, and carried by his early bent to *Poetry* to perform them rather in verse than prose. Mr. *Dryden's Fables* came out about that time, which occasioned the translations from *Chaucer*. They were first separately printed in miscellanies by J. Tonson and B. Lintot, and afterwards collected in the quarto edition of 1717. The *Imitations of English Authors*, which are added at the end, were done as early, some of them at fourteen or fifteen years old; but having also got into miscellanies, we have put them here together to complete this juvenile volume. P.

SAPPHO TO PHAON.

[OVID. *Heroid.* XV.]

SAY, lovely youth, that dost my heart command,
Can Phaon's eyes forget his Sappho's hand?
Must then her name the wretched writer prove,
To thy remembrance lost, as to thy love?
Ask not the cause that I new numbers choose,
The lute neglected, and the lyric muse;
Love taught my tears in sadder notes to flow,
And tuned my heart to elegies of woe.
I burn, I burn, as when through ripened corn
By driving winds the spreading flames are borne!
Phaon to Ætna's scorching fields retires,
While I consume with more than Ætna's fires;
No more my soul a charm in music finds,
Music has charms alone for peaceful minds.
Soft scenes of solitude no more can please,

Love enters there, and I 'm my own disease.
No more the Lesbian dames my passion move,
Once the dear objects of my guilty love ;
All other loves are lost in only thine,
Ah, youth ungrateful to a flame like mine !
Whom would not all those blooming charms surprise,
Those heavenly looks, and dear deluding eyes ?
The harp and bow would you like Phœbus bear,
A brighter Phœbus Phaon might appear ;
Would you with ivy wreathe your flowing hair,
Not Bacchus' self with Phaon could compare :
Yet Phœbus loved, and Bacchus felt the flame,
One Daphne warmed, and one the Cretan dame,
Nymphs that in verse no more could rival me,
Than even those gods contend in charms with thee.
The Muses teach me all their softest lays,
And the wide world resounds with Sappho's praise,
Though great Alcæus more sublimely sings,
And strikes with bolder rage the sounding strings,
No less renown attends the moving lyre,
Which Venus tunes, and all her loves inspire ;
To me what nature has in charms denied,
Is well by wit's more lasting flames supplied.
Though short my stature, yet my name extends
To heaven itself and earth's remotest ends.
Brown as I am, an Ethiopian dame
Inspired young Perseus with a generous flame ;
Turtles and doves of differing hues unite,
And glossy jet is paired with shining white.
If to no charms thou wilt thy heart resign,
But such as merit, such as equal thine,
By none, alas ! by none thou canst be moved,
Phaon alone by Phaon must be loved !
Yet once thy Sappho could thy cares employ,
Once in her arms you centred all your joy :
No time the dear remembrance can remove,

For oh ! how vast a memory has love !
My music, then, you could for ever hear,
And all my words were music to your ear ;
You stopped with kisses my enchanting tongue,
And found my kisses sweeter than my song.
The fair Sicilians now thy soul inflame ;
Why was I born, ye gods, a Lesbian dame ?
But ah, beware, Sicilian nymphs ! nor boast
That wandering heart which I so lately lost ;
Nor be with all those tempting words abused,
Those tempting words were all to Sappho used.
And you that rule Sicilia's happy plains,
Have pity, Venus, on your poet's pains !
Shall fortune still in one sad tenor run,
And still increase the woes so soon begun ?
Inured to sorrow from my tender years,
My parent's ashes drank my early tears :
My brother next, neglecting wealth and fame,
Ignobly burned in a destructive flame :
An infant daughter late my griefs increased,
And all a mother's cares distract my breast.
Alas, what more could fate itself impose,
But thee, the last and greatest of my woes ?
No more my robes in waving purple flow,
Nor on my hand the sparkling diamonds glow ;
No more my locks in ringlets curled diffuse
The costly sweetness of Arabian dews,
Nor braids of gold the varied tresses bind,
That fly disordered with the wanton wind,
For whom should Sappho use such arts as these ?
He 's gone, whom only she desired to please !
Cupid's light darts my tender bosom move,
Still is there cause for Sappho still to love :
So from my birth the Sisters fixed my doom,
And gave to Venus all my life to come ;
Or while my Muse in melting notes complains,

My yielding heart keeps measure to my strains.
By charms like thine which all my soul have won,
Who might not—ah! who would not be undone?
For those Aurora Cephalus might scorn,
And with fresh blushes paint the conscious morn.
For those might Cynthia lengthen Phaon's sleep,
And bid Endymion nightly tend his sheep.
Venus for those had rapt thee to the skies,
But Mars on thee might look with Venus' eyes.
See, while I write, my words are lost in tears;
The less my sense, the more my love appears.
Sure 'twas not much to bid one kind adieu
(At least to feign was never hard to you),
Farewell, my Lesbian love, you might have said,
Or coldly thus, Farewell, oh Lesbian maid!
No tear did you, no parting kiss receive,
Nor knew I then how much I was to grieve.
No lover's gift your Sappho could confer,
And wrongs and woes were all you left with her.
No charge I gave you, and no charge could give,
But this, Be mindful of our loves, and live.
Now by the nine, those powers adored by me,
And love, the god that ever waits on thee,
When first I heard (from whom I hardly knew)
That you were fled, and all my joys with you,
Like some sad statue, speechless, pale I stood,
Grief chilled my breast, and stopped my freezing blood;
No sigh to rise, no tear had power to flow,
Fixed in a stupid lethargy of woe:
But when its way th' impetuous passion found,
I rend my tresses, and my breast I wound,
I rave, then weep, I curse, and then complain,
Now swell to rage, now melt in tears again.
Not fiercer pangs distract the mournful dame,
Whose first-born infant feeds the funeral flame.

My scornful brother with a smile appears,
Insults my woes and triumphs in my tears;
His hated image ever haunts my eyes,
And why this grief? thy daughter lives, he cries.
Stung with my love, and furious with despair,
All torn my garments, and my bosom bare,
My woes, thy crimes, I to the world proclaim!
Such inconsistent things are love and shame!
'Tis thou art all my care and my delight,
My daily longing, and my dream by night:
Oh night more pleasing than the brightest day,
When fancy gives what absence takes away,
And, dressed in all its visionary charms,
Restores my fair deserter to my arms!
Then round your neck in wanton wreaths I twine,
Then you, methinks, as fondly circle mine.
But when, with day, the sweet delusions fly,
And all things wake to life and joy, but I,
As if once more forsaken, I complain,
And close my eyes to dream of you again:
Then frantic rise, and like some fury rove
Through lonely plains, and through the silent grove,
As if the silent grove, and lonely plains,
That knew my pleasures, could relieve my pains.
I view the grotto, once the scene of love,
The rocks around, the hanging roofs above,
That charmed me more, with native moss o'ergrown,
Than Phrygian marble, or the Parian stone.
For thee the fading trees appear to mourn,
And birds defer their songs till thy return;
Night shades the groves, and all in silence lie,
All but the mournful Philomel and I;
With mournful Philomel I join my strain,
Of Tereus she, of Phaon I complain.

A spring there is, whose silver waters show,
Clear as a glass, the shining sands below:

A flowery lotos spreads its arms above,
Shades all the banks, and seems itself a grove ;
Eternal greens the mossy margin grace,
Watched by the sylvan genius of the place.
Here as I lay, and swelled with tears the flood,
Before my sight a watery virgin stood :
She stood and cried, " O you that love in vain !
Fly hence, and seek the fair Leucadian main ;
There stands a rock, from whose impending steep
Apollo's fane surveys the rolling deep ;
There injured lovers, leaping from above,
Their flames extinguish, and forget to love.
Deucalion once with hopeless fury burned,
In vain he loved, relentless Pyrrha scorned ;
But when from hence he plunged into the main,
Deucalion scorned, and Pyrrha loved in vain,
Haste, Sappho, haste, from high Leucadia throw
Thy wretched weight, nor dread the deeps below ! "
She spoke, and vanished with the voice—I rise,
And silent tears fall trickling from my eyes.
I go, ye nymphs ! those rocks and seas to prove ;
How much I fear, but ah, how much I love !
I go, ye nymphs ! where furious love inspires ;
Let female fears submit to female fires.
To rocks and seas I fly from Phaon's hate,
And hope from seas and rocks a milder fate.
Ye gentle gales, beneath my body blow,
And softly lay me on the waves below !
And thou, kind Love, my sinking limbs sustain,
Spread thy soft wings, and waft me o'er the main,
Nor let a lover's death the guiltless flood profane !
On Phœbus' shrine my harp I 'll then bestow,
And this inscription shall be placed below :
" Here she who sung, to him that did inspire,
Sappho to Phœbus consecrates her lyre ;
What suits with Sappho, Phœbus, suits with thee ;

The gift, the giver, and the god agree."
But why, alas, relentless youth, ah why
To distant seas must tender Sappho fly?
Thy charms than those may far more powerful be,
And Phœbus' self is less a god to me.
Ah! canst thou doom me to the rocks and sea,
O far more faithless and more hard than they?
Ah! canst thou rather see this tender breast
Dashed on these rocks than to thy bosom prest?
This breast which once, in vain! you liked so well;
Where the loves played, and where the muses dwell.
Alas! the muses now no more inspire,
Untuned my lute, and silent is my lyre,
My languid numbers have forgot to flow,
And fancy sinks beneath a weight of woe.
Ye Lesbian virgins, and ye Lesbian dames,
Themes of my verse, and objects of my flames,
No more your groves with my glad songs shall ring,
No more these hands shall touch the trembling string
My Phaon's fled, and I those arts resign
(Wretch that I am, to call that Phaon mine!)
Return, fair youth, return, and bring along
Joy to my soul, and vigour to my song:
Absent from thee, the poet's flame expires;
But ah! how fiercely burn the lover's fires!
Gods! can no prayers, no sighs, no numbers move
One savage heart, or teach it how to love?
The winds my prayers, my sighs, my numbers bear,
The flying winds have lost them all in air!
Oh, when, alas! shall more auspicious gales
To these fond eyes restore thy welcome sails?
If you return—ah why these long delays?
Poor Sappho dies while careless Phaon stays.
Oh, launch thy bark, nor fear the watery plain;
Venus for thee shall smooth her native main.
Oh, launch thy bark, secure of prosperous gales;

Cupid for thee shall spread the swelling sails.
I you will fly—(yet ah! what cause can be,
Too cruel, youth, that you should fly from me?)
If not from Phaon I must hope for ease,
Ah, let me seek it from the raging seas:
To raging seas unpitied I 'll remove,
And either cease to live or cease to love?

ELOÏSA TO ABELARD.

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly-pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns;
What means this tumult in a vestal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
Yet, yet I love!—from Abelard it came,
And Eloïsa yet must kiss the name.
Dear fatal name! rest ever unrevealed,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence sealed:
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where mixed with God's, his loved idea lies:
Oh, write it not my hand—the name appears
Already written—wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloïsa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.
Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains
Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:
Ye rugged rocks! which holy knees have worn;
Ye grots and caverns shagged with horrid thorn!
Shrines! where their vigils pale-eyed virgins keep,
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
Though cold like you, unmoved and silent grown,

I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
All is not Heaven's while Abelard has part,
Still rebel nature holds out half my heart ;
Nor prayers nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,
Nor tears for ages taught to flow in vain.
Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes.
Oh name for ever sad ! for ever dear !
Still breathed in sighs, still ushered with a tear.
I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,
Led through a sad variety of woe :
Now warm in love, now withering in my bloom,
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom !
There stern religion quenched the unwilling flame,
There died the best of passions, love and fame.
Yet write, oh write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
Nor foes nor fortune take this power away ;
And is my Abelard less kind than they ?
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare,
Love but demands what else were shed in prayer ;
No happier task these faded eyes pursue ;
To read and weep is all they now can do.
Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief ;
Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief.
Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banished lover, or some captive maid ;
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires,
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.
Thou knowest how guiltless first I met thy flame

When love approached me under friendship's name ;
My fancy formed thee of angelic kind.
Some emanation of th' all-beauteous Mind.
Those smiling eyes, attempering every ray,
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day.
Guiltless I gazed ; heaven listened while you sung ;
And truths divine came mended from that tongue.
From lips like those what precept failed to move ?
Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to love :
Back through the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
Nor wished an angel whom I loved a man.
Dim and remote the joys of saints I see ;
Nor envy them that heaven I lose for thee.

How oft, when pressed to marriage, have I said,
Curse on all laws but those which love has made ?
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.
Let wealth, let honour, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame ;
Before true passion all those views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honour ! what are you to love ?
Oh ! happy state ! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature law :
All then is full, possessing, and possessed,
No craving void left aching in the breast :
E'en thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be)
And once the lot of Abelard and me.

Alas, how changed ! what sudden horrors rise !
A naked lover bound and bleeding lies !
Where, where was Eloïse ? her voice, her hand,
Her poniard, had opposed the dire command.
Barbarian, stay ! that bloody stroke restrain ;
The crime was common, common be the pain.
I can no more ; by shame, by rage suppressed,

Let tears, and burning blushes speak the rest.
Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
When, warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
As with cold lips I kissed the sacred veil,
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
Heaven scarce believed the conquest it surveyed,
And saints with wonder heard the vows I made.
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,
Not on the cross my eyes were fixed, but you:
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.
Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;
Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
Ah no! instruct me other joys to prize,
With other beauties charm my partial eyes,
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit Abelard for God.
Ah, think at least thy flock deserves thy care,
Plants of thy hand, and children of thy prayer.
From the false world in early youth they fled,
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.
You raised these hallowed walls; the desert smiled,
And paradise was opened in the wild.
No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate, or emblaze the floors;
No silver saints, by dying misers given,
Here bribed the rage of ill-requited Heaven:
But such plain roofs as piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise.
In these lone walls (their days eternal bound),
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crowned,
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light;
Thy eyes diffused a reconciling ray,

And gleams of glory brightened all the day.
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.
See how the force of others' prayers I try,
(O pious fraud of amorous charity!)
But why should I on others' prayers depend?
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
Ah, let thy handmaid, sister, daughter move,
And all those tender names in one, thy love!
The darksome pines that o'er yon rocks reclined,
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wandering streams that shine between the hills,
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze:
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid.
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dead repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades every flower, and darkens every green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.
Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!
Death, only death, can break the lasting chain:
And here, e'en then, shall my cold dust remain,
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine.
Ah, wretch! believed the spouse of God in vain,
Confessed within the slave of love and man.
Assist me, Heaven! but whence arose that prayer?
Sprung it from piety, or from despair?
Now turned to heaven, I weep my past offence,

Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!
How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,
And love th' offender, yet detest the offence?
How the dear object from the crime remove,
Or how distinguish penitence from love?
Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touched, so pierced, so lost as mine.
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!
How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain—do all things but forget.
But let Heaven seize it, all at once 'tis fired;
Not touched, but rapt; not wakened, but inspired!
Oh, come! oh, teach me nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself—and you.
Fill my fond heart with God alone, for He
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot:
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resigned;
Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
"Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;"
Desires composed, affections ever even;
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whisp'ring angels prompt her golden dreams.
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes,
For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring,
For her white virgins hymenæals sing.
To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ,

Far other raptures, of unholy joy:
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatched away,
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving nature free,
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee.
I wake:—no more I hear, no more I view,
The phantom flies me as unkind as you.
I call aloud; it hears not what I say:
I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.
To dream once more I close my willing eyes;
Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
Alas, no more! methinks we wandering go
Through dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round some mouldering tower pale ivy creeps,
And low-browed rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies;
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.
I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
And wake to all the griefs I left behind.
For thee the fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain;
Thy life a long dead calm of fixed repose;
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows.
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiven,
And mild as opening gleams of promised heaven.
Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?
The torch of Venus burns not for the dead.
Nature stands checked; Religion disapproves;
E'en thou art cold—yet Eloïsa loves.
Ah hopeless, lasting flames! like those that burn
To light the dead, and warm the unfruitful urn.
What scenes appear where'er I turn my view?
The dear ideas, where I fly, pursue,
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,

Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.
I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me,
Thy voice I seem in every hymn to hear,
With every bead I drop too soft a tear.
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:
In seas of flame my plunging soul is drowned,
While altars blaze, and angels tremble round.

While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
Kind, virtuous drops just gathering in my eye,
While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is opening on my soul:
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
Oppose thyself to Heaven; dispute my heart;
Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
Blot out each bright idea of the skies;
Take back that grace, those sorrows, and those tears:
Take back my fruitless penitence and prayers;
Snatch me, just mounting, from the blest abode;
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!

No, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole;
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
Fair eyes, and tempting looks (which yet I view!)
Long loved, adored ideas, all adieu!
Oh grace serene! oh virtue heavenly fair!
Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care!
Fresh blooming hope, gay daughter of the sky!
And faith, our early immortality!
Enter, each mild, each amicable guest;

Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!
See in her cell sad Eloïsa spread,
Propt on some tomb, a neighbour of the dead.
In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,
And more than echoes talk along the walls.
Here, as I watched the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound.
"Come, sister, come!" (it said, or seemed to say)
"Thy place is here, sad sister, come away!
Once like thyself, I trembled, wept, and prayed,
Love's victim then, though now a sainted maid:
But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep,
E'en superstition loses every fear:
For God, not man, absolves our frailties here."
I come, I come! prepare your roseate bowers,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flowers.
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refined in breasts seraphic glow:
Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day;
See my lips tremble, and my eye-balls roll,
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul!
Ah, no—in sacred vestments may'st thou stand,
The hallowed taper trembling in thy hand,
Present the cross before my lifted eye,
Teach me at once, and learn of me to die.
Ah, then, thy once-loved Eloïsa see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me.
See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
Till every motion, pulse, and breath be o'er;
And e'en my Abelard be loved no more.
O Death all-eloquent! you only prove
What dust we dote on, when 'tis man we love.
Then too, when fate shall thy fair frame destroy,

(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy)
In trance ecstatic may thy pangs be drowned,
Bright clouds descend, and angels watch thee round,
From opening skies may streaming glories shine,
And saints embrace thee with a love like mine.
May one kind grave unite each hapless name,
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more:
If ever chance two wandering lovers brings
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
And drink the falling tears each other sheds;
Then sadly say, with mutual pity moved,
"Oh, may we never love as these have loved!"
From the full choir when loud hosannas rise,
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
Amid that scene if some relenting eye
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,
Devotion's self shall steal a thought from heaven,
One human tear shall drop and be forgiven.
And sure, if fate some future bard shall join
In sad similitude of griefs to mine,
Condemned whole years in absence to deplore,
And image charms he must behold no more;
Such if there be, who loves so long, so well;
Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost;
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.

THE TEMPLE OF FAME.

(1711.)

ADVERTISEMENT.

The hint of the following piece was taken from Chaucer's *House of Fame*. The design is in a manner entirely altered, the descriptions and most of the particular thoughts my own: yet I could not suffer it to be printed without this acknowledgment. The reader who would compare this with Chaucer, may begin with his third Book of *Fame*, there being nothing in the two first books that answers to their title: wherever any hint is taken from him, the passage itself is set down in the marginal notes. P.

In that soft season, when descending showers
Call forth the greens, and wake the rising flowers;
When opening buds salute the welcome day,
And earth relenting feels the genial ray;
As balmy sleep had charmed my cares to rest,
And love itself was banished from my breast,
(What time the morn mysterious visions brings,
While purer slumbers spread their golden wings)
A train of phantoms in wild order rose,
And, joined, this intellectual scene compose.

I stood, methought, betwixt earth, seas, and skies;
The whole creation open to my eyes:
In air self-balanced hung the globe below,
Where mountains rise and circling oceans flow;
Here naked rocks, and empty wastes were seen,
There towery cities, and the forests green:
Here sailing ships delight the wandering eyes:
There trees, and intermingled temples rise;
Now a clear sun the shining scene displays,
The transient landscape now in clouds decays.

O'er the wide prospect as I gazed around,
Sudden I heard a wild promiscuous sound,

Like broken thunders that at distance roar,
Or billows murmuring on the hollow shore:
Then gazing up, a glorious pile beheld,
Whose towering summit ambient clouds concealed.
High on a rock of ice the structure lay,
Steep its ascent, and slippery was the way;
The wondrous rock like Parian marble shone,
And seemed, to distant sight, of solid stone.
Inscriptions here of various names I viewed,
The greater part by hostile time subdued;
Yet wide was spread their fame in ages past,
And poets once had promised they should last.
Some fresh engraved appeared of wits renowned;
I looked again, nor could their trace be found.
Critics I saw, that other names deface,
And fix their own, with labour, in their place:
Their own, like others, soon their place resigned,
Or disappeared, and left the first behind.
Nor was the work impaired by storms alone,
But felt the approaches of too warm a sun;
For fame, impatient of extremes, decays
Not more by envy than excess of praise.
Yet part no injuries of heaven could feel,
Like crystal faithful to the graving steel:
The rock's high summit, in the temple's shade,
Nor heat could melt, nor beating storm invade.
Their names inscribed unnumbered ages past
From time's first birth, with time itself shall last;
These ever new, nor subject to decays,
Spread, and grow brighter with the length of days.
So Zembla's rocks (the beauteous work of frost)
Rise white in air, and glitter o'er the coast;
Pale suns, unfelt, at distance roll away,
And on the impassive ice the lightnings play:
Eternal snows the growing mass supply,
Till the bright mountains prop the incumbent sky:

As Atlas fixed, each hoary pile appears,
The gathered winter of a thousand years.
On this foundation Fame's high temple stands;
Stupendous pile! not reared by mortal hands.
Whate'er proud Rome or artful Greece beheld,
Or elder Babylon, its frame excelled.
Four faces had the dome, and every face
Of various structure, but of equal grace:
Four brazen gates, on columns lifted high,
Salute the different quarters of the sky.
Here fabled chiefs in darker ages born,
Or worthies old, whom arms or arts adorn,
Who cities raised, or tamed a monstrous race;
The walls in venerable order grace:
Heroes in animated marble frown,
And legislators seem to think in stone.
Westward, a sumptuous frontispiece appeared,
On Doric pillars of white marble reared,
Crowned with an architrave of antique mould,
And sculpture rising on the roughened gold.
In shaggy spoils here Theseus was beheld,
And Perseus dreadful with Minerva's shield:
There great Alcides stooping with his toil,
Rests on his club, and holds the Hesperian spoil.
Here Orpheus sings; trees moving to the sound
Start from their roots, and form a shade around:
Amphion there the loud creating lyre
Strikes, and beholds a sudden Thebes aspire!
Cithæron's echoes answer to his call,
And half the mountain rolls into a wall:
There might you see the lengthening spires ascend,
The domes swell up, the widening arches bend,
The growing towers, like exhalations rise,
And the huge columns heave into the skies.
The eastern front was glorious to behold,
With diamond flaming, and barbaric gold.

There Ninus shone, who spread the Assyrian fame,
And the great founder of the Persian name :
There in long robes the royal Magi stand,
Grave Zoroaster waves the circling wand,
The sage Chaldæans robed in white appeared,
And Brahmans, deep in desert woods revered.
These stopped the moon, and called the unbodied shades
To midnight banquets in the glimmering glades ;
Made visionary fabrics round them rise,
And airy spectres skim before their eyes ;
Of talismans and sigils knew the power,
And careful watched the planetary hour.
Superior, and alone, Confucius stood,
Who taught that useful science, to be good.
But on the south, a long majestic race
Of Ægypt's priests the gilded niches grace,
Who measured earth, described the starry spheres,
And traced the long records of lunar years.
High on his car Sesostris struck my view,
Whom sceptred slaves in golden harness drew :
His hands a bow and pointed javelin hold ;
His giant limbs are armed in scales of gold.
Between the statues obelisks were placed,
And the learned walls with hieroglyphics graced.
Of Gothic structure was the northern side,
O'erwrought with ornaments of barbarous pride.
There huge Colosses rose, with trophies crowned,
And Runic characters were graved around.
There sate Zamolxis with erected eyes,
And Odin here in mimic trances dies.
There on rude iron columns, smeared with blood,
The horrid forms of Scythian heroes stood.
Druids and Bards (their once loud harps unstrung)
And youths that died to be by poets sung.
These and a thousand more of doubtful fame,

To whom old fables gave a lasting name,
In ranks adorned the temple's outward face ;
The wall in lustre and effect like glass,
Which o'er each object casting various dyes,
Enlarges some, and others multiplies :
Nor void of emblem was the mystic wall,
For thus romantic fame increases all.
The temple shakes, the sounding gates unfold,
Wide vaults appear, and roofs of fretted gold :
Raised on a thousand pillars, wreathed around
With laurel-foliage, and with eagles crowned :
Of bright, transparent beryl were the walls,
The friezes gold, and gold the capitals :
As heaven with stars, the roof with jewels glows,
And ever-living lamps depend in rows.
Full in the passage of each spacious gate,
The sage historians in white garments wait ;
Graved o'er their seats the form of Time was found,
His scythe reversed, and both his pinions bound.
Within stood heroes, who through loud alarms
In bloody fields pursued renown in arms.
High on a throne with trophies charged, I viewed
The youth that all things but himself subdued ;
His feet on sceptres and tiaras trod,
And his horned head belied the Libyan god.
There Cæsar, graced with both Minervas shone ;
Cæsar the world's great master and his own :
Unmoved, superior still in every state,
And scarce detested in his country's fate
But chief were those, who not for empire fought,
But with their toils their people's safety bought :
High o'er the rest Epaminondas stood ,
Timoleon, glorious in his brother's blood ;
Bold Scipio, saviour of the Roman state ;
Great in his triumphs, in retirement great :

And wise Aurelius, in whose well-taught mind
With boundless power unbounded virtue joined,
His own strict judge, and patron of mankind.

Much-suffering heroes next their honours claim,
Those of less noisy, and less guilty fame,
Fair virtue's silent train: supreme of these
Here ever shines the godlike Socrates:
He whom ungrateful Athens could expel,
At all times just, but when he signed the shell:
Here his abode the martyred Phocion claims,
With Agis, not the last of Spartan names:
Unconquered Cato shows the wound he tore,
And Brutus his ill genius meets no more.

But in the centre of the hallowed choir,
Six pompous columns o'er the rest aspire?
Around the shrine itself of Fame they stand,
Hold the chief honours, and the fane command.
High on the first the mighty Homer shone;
Eternal adamant composed his throne;
Father of verse! in holy fillets dressed,
His silver beard waved gently o'er his breast;
Though blind, a boldness in his looks appears;
In years he seemed, but not impaired by years.
The wars of Troy were round the pillar seen:
Here fierce Tydides wounds the Cyprian Queen:
Here Hector glorious from Patroclus' fall,
Here dragged in triumph round the Trojan wall,
Motion and life did every part inspire,
Bold was the work and proved the master's fire;
A strong expression most he seemed t' affect,
And here and there disclosed a brave neglect.

A golden column next in rank appeared,
On which a shrine of purest gold was reared
Finished the whole, and laboured every part,
With patient touches of unwearied art:
The Mantuan there in sober triumph sate,

Composed his posture and his look sedate ;
On Homer still he fixed a reverend eye,
Great without pride, in modest majesty.
In living sculpture on the sides were spread
The Latian Wars, and haughty Turnus dead ;
Eliza stretched upon the funeral pyre,
Æneas bending with his aged sire :
Troy flamed in burning gold, and o'er the throne
ARMS AND THE MAN in golden cyphers shone.
Four swans sustain a car of silver bright,
With heads advanced, and pinions stretched for flight ;
Here, like some furious prophet, Pindar rode,
And seemed to labour with th' inspiring god.
Across the harp a careless hand he flings,
And boldly sinks into the sounding strings.
The figured games of Greece the column grace.
Neptune and Jove survey the rapid race.
The youths hang o'er their chariots as they run ;
The fiery steeds seem starting from the stone ;
The champions in distorted postures threat ;
And all appeared irregularly great.
Here happy Horace tuned the Ausonian lyre
To sweeter sounds, and tempered Pindar's fire :
Pleased with Alcæsus, manly rage t' infuse
The softer spirit of the Sapphic Muse.
The polished pillar different sculptures grace ;
A work outlasting monumental brass.
Here smiling loves and bacchanals appear,
The Julian star, and great Augustus here.
The doves that round the infant poet spread
Myrtles and bays hung hovering o'er his head.
Here in a shrine that cast a dazzling light,
Sate fixed in thought the mighty Stagirite ;
His sacred head a radiant zodiac crowned,
And various animals his sides surround ;
His piercing eyes, erect, appear to view

Superior worlds, and look all nature through.
With equal rays immortal Tully shone,
The Roman Rostra decked the consul's throne:
Gathering his flowing robe, he seemed to stand
In act to speak, and graceful stretched his hand.
Behind, Rome's genius waits with civic crowns,
And the great father of his country owns.
These massy columns in a circle rise,
O'er which a pompous dome invades the skies:
Scarce to the top I stretched my aching sight,
So large it spread, and swelled to such a height.
Full in the midst proud Fame's imperial seat,
With jewels blazed, magnificently great;
The vivid emeralds there revive the eye,
The flaming rubies show their sanguine dye,
Bright azure rays from lively sapphires stream,
And lucid amber casts a golden gleam,
With various-coloured light the pavement shone,
And all on fire appeared the glowing throne;
The dome's high arch reflects the mingled blaze,
And forms a rainbow of alternate rays.
When on the goddess first I cast my sight,
Scarce seemed her stature of a cubit's height;
But swelled to larger size, the more I gazed,
Till to the roof her towering front she raised.
With her, the temple every moment grew,
And ampler vistas opened to my view:
Upwards the columns shoot, the roofs ascend,
And arches widen, and long aisles extend.
Such was her form as ancient bards have told,
Wings raise her arms, and wings her feet infold;
A thousand busy tongues the goddess bears,
A thousand open eyes, and thousand listening ears,
Beneath, in order ranged, the tuneful nine
(Her virgin handmaids) still attend the shrine:
With eyes on Fame for ever fixed, they sing;

For Fame they raise the voice, and tune the string;
With Time's first birth began the heavenly lays,
And last, eternal, through the length of days.
Around these wonders as I cast a look,
The trumpet sounded, and the temple shook,
And all the nations, summoned at the call,
From different quarters filled the crowded hall:
Of various tongues the mingled sounds were heard;
In various garbs promiscuous throngs appeared;
Thick as the bees, that with the spring renew
Their flowery toils, and sip the fragrant dew,
When the winged colonies first tempt the sky,
O'er dusky fields and shaded waters fly,
Or settling, seize the sweets the blossoms yield,
And a low murmur runs along the field.
Millions of suppliant crowds the shrine attend,
And all degrees before the goddess bend;
The poor, the rich, the valiant, and the sage,
And boasting youth, and narrative old age.
Their pleas were different, their request the same:
For good and bad alike are fond of Fame.
Some she disgraced, and some with honours crowned;
Unlike successes equal merits found.
Thus her blind sister, fickle Fortune, reigns,
And undiscerning, scatters crowns and chains.
First at the shrine the learned world appear,
And to the goddess thus prefer their prayer:
"Long have we sought t' instruct and please mankind,
With studies pale, with midnight vigils blind;
But thanked by few, rewarded yet by none,
We here appeal to thy superior throne:
On wit and learning the just prize bestow,
For fame is all we must expect below."
The goddess heard, and bade the Muses raise
The golden trumpet of eternal praise:
From pole to pole the winds diffuse the sound,

That fills the circuit of the world around ;
Not all at once, as thunder breaks the cloud ;
The notes at first were rather sweet than loud :
By just degrees they every moment rise,
Fill the wide earth, and gain upon the skies.
At every breath were balmy odours shed,
Which still grew sweeter as they wider spread ;
Less fragrant scents th' unfolding rose exhales,
Or spices breathing in Arabian gales.

Next these the good and just, an awful train,
Thus on their knees address the sacred fane :
"Since living virtue is with envy cursed,
And the best men are treated like the worst,
Do thou, just goddess, call our merits forth,
And give each deed th' exact intrinsic worth."
"Not with bare justice shall your act be crowned,"
Said Fame, "but high above desert renowned ;
Let fuller notes th' applauding world amaze,
And the loud clarion labour in your praise."

This band dismissed, behold another crowd
Preferred the same request, and lowly bowed ;
The constant tenor of whose well-spent days
No less deserved a just return of praise.
But straight the direful trump of slander sounds ;
Through the big dome the doubling thunder bounds ;
Loud as the burst of cannon rends the skies,
The dire report through every region flies,
In every ear incessant rumours rung,
And gathering scandals grow on every tongue.
From the black trumpets rusty concave broke
Sulphureous flames, and clouds of rolling smoke :
The poisonous vapour blots the purple skies,
And withers all before it as it flies.

A troop came next, who crowns and armour wore,
And proud defiance in their looks they bore :
"For thee," they cried, "amidst alarms and strife,

We sailed in tempests down the stream of life ;
For thee whole nations filled with flames and blood,
And swam to empire through the purple flood.
Those ills we dared, thy inspiration own,
What virtue seemed, was done for thee alone."
"Ambitious fools!" the Queen replied, and frowned,
"Be all your acts in dark oblivion drowned ;
Their sleep forgot, with mighty tyrants gone,
Your statues mouldered, and your names unknown!"
A sudden cloud straight snatched them from my sight,
And each majestic phantom sunk in night.
Then came the smallest tribe I yet had seen ;
Plain was their dress and modest was their mien.
"Great idol of mankind! we neither claim
The praise of merit, nor aspire to fame!
But safe in deserts from th' applause of men,
Would die unheard of, as we lived unseen,
'Tis all we beg thee, to conceal from sight
Those acts of goodness, which themselves requite.
O let us still the secret joy partake,
To follow virtue e'en for virtue's sake."
"And live there men, who slight immortal fame!
Who then with incense shall adore our name?
But mortals! know, 'tis still our greatest pride
To blaze those virtues which the good would hide.
Rise! Muses, rise ; add all your tuneful breath,
These must not sleep in darkness and in death."
She said : in air the trembling music floats,
And on the winds triumphant swell the notes ;
So soft, though high, so loud, and yet so clear,
E'en listening angels leaned from heaven to hear :
To farthest shores the ambrosial spirit flies,
Sweet to the world, and grateful to the skies.
Next these a youthful train their vows expressed,
With feathers crowned, with gay embroidery dressed :

"Hither," they cried, "direct your eyes, and see
The men of pleasure, dress and gallantry ;
Ours is the place at banquets, balls, and plays,
Sprightly our nights, polite are all our days ;
Courts we frequent, where 'tis our pleasing care
To pay due visits, and address the fair :
In fact, 'tis true, no nymph we could persuade,
But still in fancy vanquished every maid ;
Of unknown duchesses lewd tales we tell,
Yet, would the world believe us, all were well.
The joy let others have, and we the name,
And what we want in pleasure, grant in fame."
The Queen assents, the trumpet rends the skies,
And at each blast a lady's honour dies.
Pleased with the strange success, vast numbers prest
Around the shrine, and made the same request :
"What you?" she cried, "unlearned in arts to please,
Slaves to yourselves, and e'en fatigued with ease,
Who lose a length of undeserving days,
Would you usurp the lover's dear-bought praise?
To just contempt, ye vain pretenders, fall,
The people's fable, and the scorn of all."
Straight the black clarion sends a horrid sound,
Loud laughs burst out, and bitter scoffs fly round
Whispers are heard, with taunts reviling loud,
And scornful hisses run through all the crowd.
Last, those who boast of mighty mischiefs done,
Enslave their country, or usurp a throne ;
Or who their glory's dire foundation laid
On sovereigns ruined, or on friends betrayed ;
Calm, thinking villains, whom no faith could fix,
Of crooked counsels and dark politics ;
Of these a gloomy tribe surround the throne,
And beg to make th' immortal treasons known.
The trumpet roars, long flaky flames expire,

With sparks, that seemed to set the world on fire.
At the dread sound, pale mortals stood aghast,
And startled nature trembled with the blast.
This having heard and seen, some power unknown
Straight changed the scene, and snatched me from the throne.
Before my view appeared a structure fair,
Its site uncertain, if in earth or air ;
With rapid motion turned the mansion round ;
With ceaseless noise the ringing walls resound ;
Not less in number were the spacious doors,
Than leaves on trees, or sand upon the shores ;
Which still unfolded stand, by night, by day,
Pervious to winds, and open every way.
As flames by nature to the skies ascend,
As weighty bodies to the centre tend,
As to the sea returning rivers roll,
And the touched needle trembles to the pole ;
Hither, as to their proper place, arise
All various sounds from earth, the seas and skies,
Or spoke aloud, or whispered in the ear ;
Nor ever silence, rest, or peace is here.
As on the smooth expanse of crystal lakes
The sinking stone at first a circle makes ?
The trembling surface by the motion stirred,
Spreads in a second circle, then a third ;
Wide, and more wide, the floating rings advance,
Fill all the watery plain, and to the margin dance :
Thus every voice and sound, when first they break,
On neighbouring air a soft impression make ;
Another ambient circle then they move ;
That, in its turn, impels the next above ;
Through undulating air the sounds are sent,
And spread o'er all the fluid element.
There various news I heard of love and strife,
Of peace and war, health, sickness, death and life,

Of loss and gain, of famine and of store,
Of storms at sea, and travels on the shore,
Of prodigies, and portents seen in air,
Of fires and plagues, and stars with blazing hair,
Of turns of fortune, changes in the state,
The falls of favourites, projects of the great,
Of old mismanagements, taxations new :
All neither wholly false, nor wholly true.
Above, below, without, within, around,
Confused, unnumbered multitudes are found,
Who pass, repass, advance, and glide away ;
Hosts raised by fear, and phantoms of a day :
Astrologers, that future fates foreshew,
Projectors, quacks, and lawyers not a few ;
And priests and party-zealots, numerous bands
With home-born lies, or tales from foreign lands ;
Each talked aloud, or in some secret place,
And wild impatience stared in every face.
The flying rumours gathered as they rolled,
Scarce any tale was sooner heard than told ;
And all who told it added something new,
And all who heard it made enlargements too,
In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew.
Thus flying east and west, and north and south,
News travelled with increase from mouth to mouth.
So from a spark, that kindled first by chance,
With gathering force the quickening flames advance ;
Till to the clouds their curling heads aspire,
And towers and temples sink in floods of fire.
When thus ripe lies are to perfection sprung,
Full grown, and fit to grace a mortal tongue,
Through thousand vents, impatient, forth they flow,
And rush in millions on the world below.
Fame sits aloft and points them out their course,
Their date determines, and prescribes their force :
Some to remain, and some to perish soon ;

Or wane and wax alternate like the moon.
Around a thousand winged wonders fly,
Borne by the trumpet's blast and scattered through the sky.

There, at one passage, oft you might survey
A lie and truth contending for the way;
And long 'twas doubtful, both so closely pent,
Which first should issue through the narrow vent:
At last agreed, together out they fly,
Inseparable now, the truth and lie;
The strict companions are for ever joined,
And this or that unmixed, no mortal e'er shall find.

While thus I stood, intent to see and hear,
One came, methought, and whispered in my ear:
What could thus high thy rash ambition raise?
Art thou, fond youth, a candidate for praise?

'Tis true, said I, not void of hopes I came,
For who so fond as youthful bards of fame?
But few, alas! the casual blessing boast,
So hard to gain, so easy to be lost.
How vain that second life in others' breath,
Th' estate which wits inherit after death!
Ease, health, and life, for this they must resign,
(Unsure the tenure, but how vast the fine!)
The great man's curse, without the gains, endure,
Be envied, wretched, and be flattered, poor;
All luckless wits their enemies profest,
And all successful, jealous friends at best.
Nor Fame I slight, nor for her favours call;
She comes unlooked for, if she comes at all.
But if the purchase costs so dear a price,
As soothing folly, or exalting vice:
Oh, if the Muse must flatter lawless sway,
And follow still where Fortune leads the way;
Or if no basis bear my rising name,
But the fallen ruin of another's fame;

Then teach me, Heaven! to scorn the guilty bays,
Drive from my breast that wretched lust of praise,
Unblemished let me live, or die unknown;
Oh, grant an honest fame, or grant me none!

JANUARY AND MAY:

OR,

THE MERCHANT'S TALE.

FROM CHAUCER.

THERE lived in Lombardy, as authors write,
In days of old, a wise and worthy knight;
Of gentle manners, as of generous race,
Blest with much sense, more riches, and some grace,
Yet led astray by Venus' soft delights,
He scarce could rule some idle appetites:
For long ago, let priests say what they could,
Weak sinful laymen were but flesh and blood.
But in due time, when sixty years were o'er,
He vowed to lead this vicious life no more;
Whether pure holiness inspired his mind,
Or dotage turned his brain, is hard to find;
But his high courage pricked him forth to wed,
And try the pleasures of a lawful bed.
This was his nightly dream, his daily care,
And to the heavenly powers his constant prayer,
Once, ere he died, to taste the blissful life
Of a kind husband, and a loving wife.
These thoughts he fortified with reasons still
(For none want reasons to confirm their will).
Grave authors say, and witty poets sing,
That honest wedlock is a glorious thing:

But depth of judgment most in him appears,
Who wisely weds in his maturer years.
Then let him choose a damsel young and fair,
To bless his age, and bring a worthy heir;
To soothe his cares, and, free from noise and strife,
Conduct him gently to the verge of life.
Let sinful bachelors their woes deplore,
Full well they merit all they feel, and more:
Unawed by precepts, human or divine,
Like birds and beasts, promiscuously they join:
Nor know to make the present blessing last,
To hope the future, or esteem the past:
But vainly boast the joys they never tried,
And find divulged the secrets they would hide.
The married man may bear his yoke with ease,
Secure at once himself and Heaven to please;
And pass his inoffensive hours away,
In bliss all night, and innocence all day:
Though fortune change, his constant spouse remains,
Augments his joys, or mitigates his pains.
But what so pure, which envious tongues will spare?
Some wicked wits have libelled all the fair.
With matchless impudence they style a wife
The dear-bought curse, and lawful plague of life;
A bosom serpent, a domestic evil,
A night-invasion and a midday devil.
Let not the wife these slanderous words regard,
But curse the bones of every lying bard.
All other goods by fortune's hand are given,
A wife is the peculiar gift of Heaven:
Vain fortune's favours, never at a stay,
Like empty shadows, pass, and glide away;
One solid comfort, our eternal wife,
Abundantly supplies us all our life:
This blessing lasts (if those who try, say true)

As long as heart can wish—and longer too.
Our grandsire Adam, ere of Eve possessed,
Alone, and e'en in Paradise unblessed,
With mournful looks the blissful scenes surveyed,
And wandered in the solitary shade :
The Maker saw, took pity, and bestowed
Woman, the last, the best reserved of God.
A wife ! ah gentle deities, can he
That has a wife, e'er feel adversity ?
Would men but follow what the sex advise,
All things would prosper, all the world grow wise.
'Twas by Rebecca's aid that Jacob won
His father's blessing from an elder son :
Abusive Nabal owed his forfeit life
To the wise conduct of a prudent wife :
Heroic Judith, as old Hebrews show,
Preserved the Jews, and slew the Assyrian foe :
At Hester's suit, the persecuting sword
Was sheathed, and Israel lived to bless the Lord.
These weighty motives, January the sage,
Maturely pondered in his riper age ;
And charmed with virtuous joys, and sober life,
Would try that Christian comfort called a wife.
His friends were summoned on a point so nice,
To pass their judgment, and to give advice ;
But fixed before, and well resolved was he ;
(As men that ask advice are wont to be.)
"My friends," he cried (and cast a mournful look
Around the room, and sighed before he spoke :)
"Beneath the weight of threescore years I bend,
And, worn with cares, am hastening to my end ;
How I have lived, alas ! you know too well,
In worldly follies, which I blush to tell ;
But gracious Heaven has oped my eyes at last,
With due regret I view my vices past,
And, as the precept of the Church decrees,

Will take a wife, and live in holy ease.
But since by counsel all things should be done,
And many heads are wiser still than one;
Choose you for me, who best shall be content
When my desire's approved by your consent.
"One caution yet is needful to be told,
To guide your choice; this wife must not be old:
My soul abhors the tasteless, dry embrace
Of a stale virgin with a winter face;
In that cold season love but treats his guest
With bean-straw, and tough forage at the best.
No crafty widows shall approach my bed;
Those are too wise for bachelors to wed;
As subtle clerks by many schools are made,
Twice-married dames are mistresses of the trade:
But young and tender virgins, ruled with ease,
We form like wax, and mould them as we please.
"Conceive me, sirs, nor take my sense amiss;
'Tis what concerns my soul's eternal bliss;
Since if I found no pleasure in my spouse,
As flesh is frail, and who (God help me) knows?
Then should I live in lewd adultery,
And sink downright to Satan when I die.
Or were I cursed with an unfruitful bed,
The righteous end were lost for which I wed;
To raise up seed to bless the powers above,
And not for pleasure only, or for love.
Think not I dote; 'tis time to take a wife,
When vigorous blood forbids a chaster life:
Those that are blest with store of grace divine,
May live like saints, by Heaven's consent and mine.
"And since I speak of wedlock, let me say,
(As, thank my stars, in modest truth I may)
My limbs are active, still I 'm sound at heart,
And a new vigour springs in every part.
Think not my virtue lost, though time has shed

These reverend honours on my hoary head ;
Thus trees are crowned with blossoms white as snow,
The vital sap then rising from below :
Old as I am, my lusty limbs appear
Like winter greens that flourish all the year.
Now, sirs, you know to what I stand inclined,
Let every friend with freedom speak his mind."
He said ; the rest in different parts divide ;
The knotty point was urged on either side :
Marriage, the theme on which they all declaimed,
Some praised with wit, and some with reason blamed,
Till, what with proofs, objections, and replies,
Each wondrous positive, and wondrous wise,
There fell between his brothers a debate,
Placebo this was called, and Justin that.
First to the knight Placebo thus begun
(Mild were his looks, and pleasing was his tone) ;
" Such prudence, sir, in all your words appears,
As plainly proves, experience dwells with years !
Yet you pursue sage Solomon's advice,
To work by counsel when affairs are nice :
But, with the wise man's leave, I must protest,
So may my soul arrive at ease and rest
As still I hold your own advice the best.
" Sir, I have lived a courtier all my days,
And studied men, their manners and their ways ;
And have observed this useful maxim still,
To let my betters always have their will.
Nay, if my lord affirmed that black was white,
My word was this, Your honour 's in the right.
Th' assuming wit, who deems himself so wise,
As his mistaken patron to advise,
Let him not dare to vent his dangerous thought,
A noble fool was never in a fault.
This, sir, affects not you, whose every word
Is weighed with judgment and befits a lord :

Your will is mine ; and is (I will maintain)
Pleasing to God, and should be so to man ;
At least, your courage all the world must praise,
Who dare to wed in your declining days.
Indulge the vigour of your mounting blood,
And let grey fools be indolently good,
Who, past all pleasure, damn the joys of sense,
With reverend dulness and grave impotence."
Justin, who silent sat and heard the man,
Thus, with a philosophic frown began :
"A heathen author, of the first degree
(Who, though not faith, had sense as well as we),
Bids us be certain our concerns to trust
To those of generous principles, and just.
The venture's greater, I 'll presume to say,
To give your person than your goods away :
And therefore, sir, as you regard your rest,
First learn your lady's qualities at least :
Whether she's chaste or rampant, proud or civil ;
Meek as a saint, or haughty as the devil ;
Whether an easy, fond, familiar fool,
Or such a wit as no man e'er can rule ?
'Tis true, perfection none must hope to find
In all this world, much less in womankind ;
But if her virtues prove the larger share,
Bless the kind fates and think your fortune rare.
Ah, gentle sir, take warning of a friend,
Who knows too well the state you thus commend ;
And spite of all his praises must declare,
All he can find is bondage, cost, and care.
Heaven knows, I shed full many a private tear,
And sigh in silence, lest the world should hear :
While all my friends applaud my blissful life,
And swear no mortal 's happier in a wife ;
Demure and chaste as any vestal nun,
The meekest creature that beholds the sun !

But, by th' immortal powers I feel the pain,
And he that smarts has reason to complain.
Do what you list, for me ; you must be sage,
And cautious sure ; for wisdom is in age :
But at these years, to venture on the fair !
By him who made the ocean, earth, and air,
To please a wife when her occasions call,
Would busy the most vigorous of us all.
If what I speak my noble lord offend,
My tedious sermon here is at an end."
" 'Tis well, 'tis wondrous well," the knight replies,
" Most worthy kinsman, faith you 're mighty wise !
We, sirs, are fools ; and must resign the cause
To heathenish authors, proverbs, and old saws."
He spoke with scorn and turned another way—
" What does my friend, my dear Placebo say ? "
" I say," quoth he, " by Heaven, the man's to blame,
To slander wives and wedlock's holy name."
At this the council rose, without delay,
Each, in his own opinion, went his way ;
With full consent, that, all disputes appeased,
The knight should marry when and where he pleased.
Who now but January exults with joy ?
The charms of wedlock all his soul employ :
Each nymph by turns his wavering mind possest,
And reigned the short-lived tyrant of his breast ;
While fancy pictured every lively part,
And each bright image wandered o'er his heart.
Thus, in some public forum fixed on high,
A mirror shows the figures moving by ;
Still one by one, in swift succession pass
The gliding shadows o'er the polished glass.
This lady's charms the nicest could not blame,
But vile suspicions had aspersed her fame ;
That was with sense, but not with virtue blest ;
And one had grace, that wanted all the rest.

Thus doubting long what nymph he should obey,
He fixed at last upon the youthful May.
Her faults he knew not, Love is always blind,
But every charm revolved within his mind :
Her tender age, her form divinely fair,
Her easy motion, her attractive air,
Her sweet behaviour, her enchanting face,
Her moving softness, and majestic grace.

Much in his prudence did our knight rejoice,
And thought no mortal could dispute his choice :
Once more in haste he summoned every friend,
And told them all, their pains were at an end.
"Heaven, that," said he, "inspired me first to wed,
Provides a consort worthy of my bed :
Let none oppose th' election, since on this
Depends my quiet, and my future bliss.

"A dame there is, the darling of my eyes,
Young, beauteous, artless, innocent, and wise ;
Chaste, though not rich ; and though not nobly born,
Of honest parents, and may serve my turn,
Her will I wed, if gracious Heaven so please ;
To pass my age in sanctity and ease :
And thank the powers, I may possess alone
The lovely prize, and share my bliss with none !
If you, my friends, this virgin can procure,
My joys are full, my happiness is sure.

"One only doubt remains : full oft I've heard.
By casuists grave, and deep divines averred ;
That 'tis too much for human race to know
The bliss of heaven above, and earth below ;
Now should the nuptial pleasures prove so great,
To match the blessings of the future state,
Those endless joys were ill exchanged for these ;
Then clear this doubt, and set my mind at ease."

This Justin heard, nor could his spleen control,
Touched to the quick, and tickled at the soul :

"Sir Knight," he cried, "if this be all you dread,
Heaven put it past your doubt, whene'er you wed ;
And to my fervent prayers so far consent,
That ere the rites are o'er, you may repent !
Good Heaven, no doubt, the nuptial state approves,
Since it chastises still what best it loves.
"Then be not, sir, abandoned to despair ;
Seek, and perhaps you 'll find among the fair,
One, that may do your business to a hair ;
Not e'en in wish, your happiness delay,
But prove the scourge to lash you on your way :
Then to the skies your mounting soul shall go,
Swift as an arrow soaring from the bow !
Provided still, you moderate your joy,
Nor in your pleasures all your might employ,
Let reason's rule your strong desires abate,
Nor please too lavishly your gentle mate.
Old wives there are, of judgment most acute,
Who solve these questions beyond all dispute ;
Consult with those, and be of better cheer ;
Marry, do penance, and dismiss your fear."
So said, they rose, nor more the work delayed ;
The match was offered, the proposals made.
The parents, you may think, would soon comply ;
The old have interest ever in their eye.
Nor was it hard to move the lady's mind ;
When fortune favours, still the fair are kind.
I pass each previous settlement and deed,
Too long for me to write, or you to read ;
Nor will with quaint impertinence display
The pomp, the pageantry, the proud array.
The time approached, to church the parties went,
At once with carnal and devout intent :
Forth came the priest, and bade th' obedient wife
Like Sarah or Rebecca lead her life :
Then prayed the powers the fruitful bed to bless,

And made all sure enough with holiness.
And now the palace gates are opened wide,
The guests appear in order, side by side,
And placed in state, the bridegroom and the bride.
The breathing flute's soft notes are heard around,
And the shrill trumpets mix their silver sound ;
The vaulted roofs with echoing music ring,
These touch the vocal stops, and those the trembling string.
Not thus Amphion tuned the warbling lyre,
Nor Joab the sounding clarion could inspire,
Nor fierce Theodamas, whose sprightly strain
Could swell the soul to rage, and fire the martial train.
Bacchus himself, the nuptial feast to grace,
(So poets sing) was present on the place :
And lovely Venus, goddess of delight,
Shook high her flaming torch in open sight :
And danced around, and smiled on every knight :
Pleased her best servant would his courage try,
No less in wedlock, than in liberty.
Full many an age old Hymen had not spied
So kind a bridegroom, or so bright a bride.
Ye bards ! renowned among the tuneful throng
For gentle lays, and joyous nuptial song ;
Think not your softest numbers can display
The matchless glories of this blissful day :
The joys are such, as far transcend your rage,
When tender youth has wedded stooping age.
The beauteous dame sate smiling at the board,
And darted amorous glances at her lord.
Not Hester's self, whose charms the Hebrews sing,
E'er looked so lovely on her Persian king :
Bright as the rising sun, in summer's day,
And fresh and blooming as the month of May !
The joyful knight surveyed her by his side,

Nor envied Paris with the Spartan bride.
Meantime the vigorous dancers beat the ground,
And songs were sung, and flowing bowls went round.
With odorous spices they perfumed the place,
And mirth and pleasure shone in every face.
Damian alone, of all the menial train,
Sad in the midst of triumphs, sighed for pain ;
Damian alone, the knight's obsequious squire,
Consumed at heart, and fed a secret fire.
His lovely mistress all his soul possessed,
He looked, he languished, and could take no rest :
His task performed, he sadly went his way,
Fell on his bed, and loathed the light of day.
There let him lie ; till his relenting dame
Weep in her turn, and waste in equal flame.
The weary sun, as learned poets write,
Forsook the horizon, and rolled down the light ;
While glittering stars his absent beams supply,
And night's dark mantle overspread the sky.
Then rose the guests ; and as the time required,
Each paid his thanks, and decently retired.
But anxious cares the pensive squire oppressed.
Sleep fled his eyes, and peace forsook his breast,
The raging flames that in his bosom dwell,
He wanted art to hide, and means to tell.
Yet hoping time th' occasion might betray,
Composed a sonnet to the lovely May ;
Which, writ and folded with the nicest art,
He wrapped in silk, and laid upon his heart.
When now the fourth revolving day was run,
('Twas June, and Cancer had received the sun)
Forth from her chamber came the beauteous bride ;
The good old knight moved slowly by her side.
High mass was sung ; they feasted in the hall ;
The servants round stood ready at their call.
The squire alone was absent from the board,

And much his sickness grieved his worthy lord,
Who prayed his spouse, attended with her train,
To visit Damian, and divert his pain.
Th' obliging dames obeyed with one consent ;
They left the hall, and to his lodging went.
The female tribe surround him as he lay,
And close beside him sat the gentle May :
Where, as she tried his pulse, he softly drew
A heaving sigh, and cast a mournful view !
Then gave his bill, and bribed the powers divine,
With secret vows to favour his design.

Who studies now but discontented May ?
On her soft couch uneasily she lay :
The lumpish husband snored away the night,
Till coughs awaked him near the morning light.
What then he did, I 'll not presume to tell,
Nor if she thought herself in heaven or hell :
Honest and dull in nuptial bed they lay,
Till the bell tolled, and all arose to pray.

Were it by forceful destiny decreed,
Or did from chance, or nature's power proceed ;
Or that some star, with aspect kind to love,
Shed its selectest influence from above ;
Whatever was the cause, the tender dame
Felt the first motions of an infant flame ;
Received th' impressions of the love-sick squire,
And wasted in the soft infectious fire.
Ye fair, draw near, let May's example move
Your gentle minds to pity those who love ! -
Had some fierce tyrant in her stead been found,
The poor adorer sure had hanged, or drowned :
But she, your sex's mirror, free from pride,
Was much too meek to prove a homicide.

But to my tale : Some sages have defined
Pleasure the sovereign bliss of humankind :
Our knight (who studied much, we may suppose)

Derived his high philosophy from those ;
For, like a prince, he bore the vast expense
Of lavish pomp, and proud magnificence :
His house was stately, his retinue gay,
Large was his train, and gorgeous his array.
His spacious garden made to yield to none,
Was compassed round with walls of solid stone ;
Priapus could not half describe the grace
(Though god of gardens) of this charming place :
A place to tire the rambling wits of France
In long descriptions, and exceed romance ;
Enough to shame the gentlest bard that sings
Of painted meadows, and of purling springs.
Full in the centre of the flowery ground,
A crystal fountain spread its streams around,
The fruitful banks with verdant laurels crowned:
About this spring (if ancient fame say true)
The dapper elves their moonlight sports pursue :
Their pigmy king, and little fairy queen,
In circling dances gambolled on the green,
While tuneful sprites a merry concert made,
And airy music warbled through the shade.
Hither the noble knight would oft repair,
(His scene of pleasure, and peculiar care)
For this he held it dear, and always bore
The silver key that locked the garden door.
To this sweet place in summer's sultry heat,
He used from noise and business to retreat ;
And here in dalliance spend the livelong day,
Solus cum sola, with his sprightly May.
For whate'er work was undischarged a-bed,
The duteous knight in this fair garden sped.
But ah ! what mortal lives of bliss secure.
How short a space our worldly joys endure !
O Fortune, fair, like all thy treacherous kind,
But faithless still, and wavering as the wind !

O painted monster, formed mankind to cheat,
With pleasing poison, and with soft deceit!
This rich, this amorous, venerable knight,
Amidst his ease, his solace, and delight,
Struck blind by thee, resigns his days to grief,
And calls on death, the wretch's last relief.
The rage of jealousy then seized his mind,
For much he feared the faith of womankind.
His wife not suffered from his side to stray,
Was captive kept, he watched her night and day,
Abridged her pleasures, and confined her sway.
Full oft in tears did hapless May complain,
And sighed full oft; but sighed and wept in vain;
She looked on Damian with a lover's eye:
For oh, 'twas fixt; she must possess or die!
Nor less impatience vexed her amorous squire,
Wild with delay, and burning with desire.
Watched as she was, yet could he not refrain,
By secret writing to disclose his pain:
The dame by signs revealed her kind intent,
Till both were conscious what each other meant.
Ah, gentle knight, what would thy eyes avail,
Though they could see as far as ships can sail?
'Tis better, sure, when blind, deceived to be,
Than be deluded when a man can see!
Argus himself, so cautious and so wise,
Was overwatched, for all his hundred eyes:
So many an honest husband may, 'tis known,
Who, wisely, never thinks the case his own.
The dame at last, by diligence and care,
Procured the key her knight was wont to bear;
She took the wards in wax before the fire,
And gave th' impression to the trusty squire.
By means of this, some wonder shall appear,
Which, in due place and season, you may hear.
Well sung sweet Ovid, in the days of yore,

What sleight is that, which love will not explore?
And Pyramus and Thisbe plainly show
The feats true lovers, when they list, can do:
Though watched and captive, yet in spite of all,
They found the art of kissing through a wall.
But now no longer from our tale to stray;
It happed, that once upon a summer's day,
Our reverend knight was urged to amorous play;
He raised his spouse ere matin-bell was rung,
And thus his morning canticle he sung:
"Awake, my love, disclose thy radiant eyes;
Arise, my wife, my beauteous lady, rise!
Hear how the doves with pensive notes complain,
And in soft murmurs tell the trees their pain:
The winter's past; the clouds and tempest fly;
The sun adorns the fields, and brightens all the sky.
Fair without spot, whose every charming part
My bosom wounds, and captivates my heart;
Come, and in mutual pleasures let 's engage,
Joy of my life, and comfort of my age."
This heard, to Damian straight a sign she made,
To haste before; the gentle squire obeyed:
Secret, and undescried he took his way,
And ambushed close behind an arbour lay.
It was not long ere January came,
And hand in hand with him his lovely dame;
Blind as he was, not doubting all was sure,
He turned the key, and made the gate secure.
"Here let us walk," he said, "observed by none,
Conscious of pleasures to the world unknown:
So may my soul have joy, as thou, my wife,
Art far the dearest solace of my life;
And rather would I choose, by Heaven above,
To die this instant, than to lose thy love.
Reflect what truth was in my passion shewn,
When unendowed, I took thee for my own,

And sought no treasure but thy heart alone.
Old as I am, and now deprived of sight,
Whilst thou art faithful to thy own true knight,
Nor age, nor blindness rob me of delight.
Each other loss with patience I can bear,
The loss of thee is what I only fear.
" Consider then, my lady and my wife,
The solid comforts of a virtuous life.
As first, the love of Christ himself you gain ;
Next, your own honour undefiled maintain ;
And lastly, that which sure your mind must move,
My whole estate shall gratify your love :
Make your own terms, and ere to-morrow's sun
Displays his light, by Heaven it shall be done.
I seal the contract with a holy kiss,
And will perform, by this—my dear, and this—
Have comfort, spouse, nor think thy lord unkind ;
'Tis love, not jealousy, that fires my mind.
For when thy charms my sober thoughts engage,
And joined to them my own unequal age,
From thy dear side I have no power to part,
Such secret transports warm my melting heart.
For who that once possess those heavenly charms,
Could live one moment absent from thy arms ? "
He ceased, and May with modest grace replied ;
(Weak was her voice, as while she spoke she cried :)
" Heaven knows " (with that a tender sigh she drew)
" I have a soul to save as well as you :
And, what no less you to my charge commend,
My dearest honour, will to death defend.
To you in holy church I gave my hand,
And joined my heart in wedlock's sacred band :
Yet after this, if you distrust my care,
Then hear, my lord, and witness what I swear :
" First may the yawning earth her bosom rend,
And let me hence to hell alive descend ;

Or die the death I dread no less than hell,
Sewed in a sack, and plunged into a well:
Ere I my fame by one false act disgrace,
Or once renounce the honour of my race.
For know, sir knight, of gentle blood I came,
I loathe base deeds, and startle at their name.
But jealous men on their own crimes reflect,
And learn from thence their ladies to suspect:
Else why these needless cautions, sir, to me?
These doubts and fears of female constancy!
This chime still rings in every lady's ear,
The only strain a wife must hope to hear."

Thus while she spoke a sidelong glance she cast.
Where Damian kneeling, worshipped as she past.
She saw him watch the motions of her eye,
And singled out a pear-tree planted nigh:
'Twas charged with fruit that made a goodly show,
And hung with dangling pears was every bough.
Thither th' obsequious squire addressed his pace
And climbing, in the summit took his place;
The knight and lady walked beneath in view,
Where let us leave them, and our tale pursue.

'Twas now the season when the glorious sun
His heavenly progress through the Twins had run
And Jove, exalted, his mild influence yields,
To glad the glebe, and paint the flowery fields;
Clear was the day, and Phœbus rising bright,
Had streaked the azure firmament with light;
He pierced the glittering clouds with golden streams,
And warmed the womb of earth with genial beams.

It so befel, in that fair morning-tide,
The fairies sported on the garden side,
And in the midst, their monarch and his bride.
So featly tripped the light-foot ladies round,
The knights so nimbly o'er the green-sward bound,
That scarce they bent the flowers, or touched the ground,

The dances ended, all the fairy train
For pinks and daisies searched the flowery plain ;
While on a bank reclined of rising green,
Thus, with a frown, the King bespoke his Queen :
" 'Tis too apparent, argue what you can,
The treachery you women use to man :
A thousand authors have this truth made out,
And sad experience leaves no room for doubt.
" Heaven rest thy spirit, noble Solomon,
A wiser monarch never saw the sun :
All wealth, all honours, the supreme degree
Of earthly bliss, was well bestowed on thee !
For sagely hast thou said : Of all mankind,
One only just, and righteous, hope to find :
But should'st thou search the spacious world around,
Yet one good woman is not to be found.
" Thus says the King who knew your wickedness ;
The son of Sirach testifies no less.
So may some wildfire on your bodies fall.
Or some devouring plague consume you all ;
As well you view the traitor in the tree,
And well this honourable knight you see :
But since he 's blind and old (a helpless case)
His squire shall play him false before your face.
" Now by my own dread majesty I swear,
And by this awful sceptre which I bear,
No impious wretch shall 'scape unpunished long.
That in my presence offers such a wrong.
I will this instant undeceive the knight,
And, in the very act restore his sight :
And set the woman here in open view,
A warning to these ladies, and to you,
And all the faithless sex, for ever to be true."
" And will you so," replied the Queen, " indeed !
Now, by my mother's soul it is decreed,
She shall not want an answer at her need.

For her, and for her daughters, I 'll engage,
And all the sex in each succeeding age ;
Art shall be theirs to varnish an offence,
And fortify their crimes with confidence.
Nay, were they taken in a strict embrace,
Seen with both eyes, and pinioned on the place ;
All they shall need is to protest and swear,
Breathe a soft sigh, and drop a tender tear ;
Till their wise husbands, gulled by arts like these,
Grow gentle, tractable, and tame as geese.

"What though this slanderous Jew, this Solomon,
Called women fools, and knew full many a one ;
The wiser wits of later times declare,
How constant, chaste, and virtuous women are :
Witness the martyrs, who resigned their breath,
Serene in torments, unconcerned in death ;
And witness next what Roman authors tell,
How Arria, Portia, and Lucretia fell.

"But since the sacred leaves to all are free,
And men interpret texts, why should not we?
By this no more was meant, than to have shown,
That sovereign goodness dwells in him alone
Who only Is, and is but only One.
But grant the worst ; shall women then be weighed
By every word that Solomon has said ?
What though this king (as ancient story boasts)
Built a fair temple to the Lord of hosts ;
He ceased at last his Maker to adore,
And did as much for idol gods, or more.
Beware what lavish praises you confer
On a rank lecher and idolater ;
Whose reign indulgent God, says Holy Writ,
Did but for David's righteous sake permit ;
David, the monarch after Heaven's own mind,
Who loved our sex, and honoured all our kind.

Well, I 'm a woman, and as such must speak ;

Silence would swell me, and my heart would break.
Know then, I scorn your dull authorities,
Your idle wits, and all their learned lies.
By Heaven, those authors are our sex's foes,
Whom, in our right, I must and will oppose."
"Nay," quoth the King, "dear madam, be not wroth:
I yield it up; but since I gave my oath,
That this much-injured knight again should see;
It must be done—I am a king," said he,
"And one whose faith has ever sacred been."
"And so has mine," she said, "I am a queen:
Her answer she shall have, I undertake;
And thus an end of all dispute I make.
Try when you list; and you shall find, my lord,
It is not in our sex to break our word."
We leave them here in this heroic strain,
And to the knight our story turns again;
Who in the garden, with his lovely May,
Sung merrier than the cuckoo or the jay:
This was his song: "Oh kind and constant be,
"Constant and kind I'll ever prove to thee."
Thus singing as he went, at last he drew
By easy steps, to where the pear-tree grew:
The longing dame looked up, and spied her love
Full fairly perched among the boughs above.
She stopped, and sighing: "Oh, good gods," she cried,
"What pangs, what sudden shoots distend my side?
Oh for that tempting fruit, so fresh, so green;
Help, for the love of heaven's immortal queen!
Help, dearest lord, and save at once the life
Of thy poor infant, and thy longing wife!"
Sore sighed the knight to hear his lady's cry,
But could not climb, and had no servant nigh:
Old as he was, and void of eye-sight too,
What could, alas! a helpless husband do?

"And must I languish then," she said, "and die,
Yet view the lovely fruit before my eye?
At least, kind sir, for charity's sweet sake,
Vouchsafe the trunk between your arms to take;
Then from your back I might ascend the tree;
Do you but stoop, and leave the rest to me."
"With all my soul," he thus replied again,
"I'd spend my dearest blood to ease thy pain."
With that, his back against the trunk he bent,
She seized a twig, and up the tree she went.
Now prove your patience, gentle ladies all!
Nor let on me your heavy anger fall:
'Tis truth I tell, though not in phrase refined;
Though blunt my tale, yet honest is my mind.
In that nice moment, lo! the wondering knight
Looked out, and stood restored to sudden sight.
Straight on the tree his eager eyes he bent,
As one whose thoughts were on his spouse intent;
But when he saw his bosom-wife so dressed,
His rage was such as cannot be expressed:
Not frantic mothers when their infants die,
With louder clamours rend the vaulted sky:
He cried, he roared, he stormed, he tore his hair;
"Death! hell! and furies! what dost thou do there?"
"What ails my lord?" the trembling dame replied;
"I thought your patience had been better tried:
Is this your love, ungrateful and unkind,
This my reward for having cured the blind?
Why was I taught to make my husband see,
By struggling with a man upon a tree?
Did I for this the power of magic prove?
Unhappy wife, whose crime was too much love!"
"If this be struggling, by this holy light,
'Tis struggling to disgrace me," quoth the knight.
"Guard me, good angels!" cried the gentle May,

"Pray Heaven, this magic work the proper way!
Alas! my love, 'tis certain, could you see,
You ne'er had used these killing words to me:
So help me, fates, as 'tis no perfect sight,
But some faint glimmering of a doubtful light."
"What I have said," quoth he, "I must maintain,
For, by th' immortal powers it *seemed* too plain——"
"By all those powers, some frenzy seized your mind,"
Replied the dame; "are these the thanks I find?
Wretch that I am, that e'er I was so kind!"
She said; a rising sigh expressed her woe,
The ready tears apace began to flow,
And as they fell she wiped from either eye
The drops (for women, when they list, can cry).
The knight was touched; and in his looks appeared
Signs of remorse, while thus his spouse he cheered:
"Madam, 'tis past, and my short anger o'er;
Come down, and vex your tender heart no more:
Excuse me, dear, if aught amiss was said,
For, on my soul, amends shall soon be made:
Let my repentance your forgiveness draw,
By Heaven, I swore but what I *thought* I saw."
"Ah, my loved lord! 'twas much unkind," she cried,
"On bare suspicion thus to treat your bride.
But till your sight 's established, for a while,
Imperfect objects may your sense beguile.
Thus when from sleep we first our eyes display,
The balls are wounded with the piercing ray,
And dusky vapours rise, and intercept the day.
So just recovering from the shades of night,
Your swimming eyes are drunk with sudden light,
Strange phantoms dance around, and skim before your sight:
Then, sir, be cautious, nor too rashly deem;

Heaven knows how seldom things are what they seem!
Consult your reason, and you soon shall find
'Twas you were jealous, not your wife unkind:
Jove ne'er spoke oracle more true than this,
None judge so wrong as those who think amiss."
With that she leaped into her lord's embrace,
With well-dissembled virtue in her face.
He hugged her close, and kissed her o'er and o'er,
Disturbed with doubts and jealousies no more:
Both, pleased and blessed, renewed their mutual vows.
A fruitful wife, and a believing spouse.
Thus ends our tale, whose moral next to make,
Let all wise husbands hence example take;
And pray, to crown the pleasure of their lives,
To be so well deluded by their wives.

THE WIFE OF BATH.

FROM CHAUCER.

BEHOLD the woes of matrimonial life,
And hear with reverence an experienced wife!
To dear-bought wisdom give the credit due,
And think, for once, a woman tells you true.
In all these trials I have borne a part,
I was myself the scourge that caused the smart;
For, since fifteen, in triumph have I led
Five captive husbands from the church to bed.
Christ saw a wedding once, the Scripture says,
And saw but one, 'tis thought, in all his days;
Whence some infer, whose conscience is too nice,
No pious Christian ought to marry twice.
But let them read, and solve me, if they can,
The words addressed to the Samaritan:

Five times in lawful wedlock was she joined ;
And sure the certain stint was ne'er defined.
Increase and multiply, was Heaven's command,
And that's a text I clearly understand.
This too, "Let men their sires and mothers leave,
And to their dearer wives for ever cleave."
More wives than one by Solomon were tried,
Or else the wisest of mankind's belied.
I've had myself full many a merry fit ;
And trust in Heaven I may have many yet.
For when my transitory spouse, unkind,
Shall die, and leave his woeful wife behind.
I'll take the next good Christian I can find.
Paul, knowing one could never serve our turn,
Declared 'twas better far to wed than burn.
There 's danger in assembling fire and tow ;
I grant them that, and what it means you know.
The same Apostle, too, has elsewhere owned,
No precept for virginity he found :
'Tis but a counsel—and we women still
Take which we like, the counsel, or our will.
I envy not their bliss, if he or she
Think fit to live in perfect chastity ;
Pure let them be, and free from taint of vice ;
I, for a few slight spots, am not so nice.
Heaven calls us different ways, on these bestows
One proper gift, another grants to those :
Not every man 's obliged to sell his store,
And give up all his substance to the poor ;
Such as are perfect, may, I can't deny ;
But, by your leave, divines, so am not I.
Full many a saint, since first the world began,
Lived an unspotted maid, in spite of man :
Let such (a god's name) with fine wheat be fed,
And let us honest wives eat barley bread.
For me, I'll keep the post assigned by Heaven.

And use the copious talent it has given :
Know then, of those five husbands I have had,
Three were just tolerable, two were bad.
The three were old, but rich and fond beside,
And toiled most piteously to please their bride :
But since their wealth (the best they had) was mine,
The rest, without much loss, I could resign.
Sure to be loved, I took no pains to please,
Yet had more pleasure far than they had ease.
Presents flowed in apace : with showers of gold
They made their court, like Jupiter of old.
If I but smiled, a sudden youth they found,
And a new palsy seized them when I frowned.
Ye sovereign wives ! give ear and understand,
Thus shall ye speak, and exercise command.
For never was it given to mortal man,
To lie so boldly as we women can :
Forswear the fact, though seen with both his eyes,
And call your maids to witness how he lies.
"Hark, old Sir Paul !" ('twas thus I used to say)
"Whence is our neighbour's wife so rich and gay ?
Treated, caressed, where'er she 's pleased to roam—
I sit in tatters, and immured at home.
Why to her house dost thou so oft repair ?
Art thou so amorous ? and is she so fair ?
If I but see a cousin or a friend,
Lord ! how you swell and rage like any fiend !
But you reel home, a drunken beastly bear,
Then preach till midnight in your easy chair ;
Cry, wives are false, and every woman evil,
And give up all that 's female to the devil.
"If poor, you say, she drains her husband's purse ;
If rich, she keeps her priest, or something worse ;
If highly born, intolerably vain,
Vapours and pride by turns possess her brain,
Now gaily mad, now sourly splenetic,

Freakish when well, and fretful when she's sick.
If fair, then true she cannot long abide,
By pressing youth attacked on every side:
If foul, her wealth the lusty lover lures,
Or else her wit some fool-gallant procures,
Or else she dances with becoming grace,
Or shape excuses the defects of face.
There swims no goose so grey, but soon or late,
She finds some honest gander for her mate.
"Horses," thou say'st, "and asses, men may try,
And ring suspected vessels ere they buy:
But wives, a random choice, untried they take,
They dream in courtship, but in wedlock wake:
Then, nor till then, the veil 's removed away,
And all the woman glares in open day.
"You tell me, to preserve your wife's good grace,
Your eyes must always languish on my face,
Your tongue with constant flatteries feed my ear,
And tag each sentence with, 'My life!' 'My dear!'
If by strange chance a modest blush be raised,
Be sure my fine complexion must be praised.
My garments always must be new and gay,
And feasts still kept upon my wedding-day.
Then must my nurse be pleased, and favourite maid;
And endless treats, and endless visits paid,
To a long train of kindred, friends, allies;
All this thou say'st, and all thou say'st are lies.
"On Jenkin, too, you cast a squinting eye:
What! can your prentice raise your jealousy?
Fresh are his ruddy cheeks, his forehead fair,
And like the burnished gold his curling hair.
But clear thy wrinkled brow, and quit thy sorrow,
I'd scorn your prentice, should you die to-morrow.
"Why are thy chests all locked? on what design?
Are not thy worldly goods and treasure mine?
Sir, I 'm no fool: nor shall you, by St. John,

Have goods and body to yourself alone.
One you shall quit, in spite of both your eyes—
I heed not, I, the bolts, the locks, the spies.
If you had wit, you 'd say, 'Go where you will,
Dear spouse, I credit not the tales they tell :
Take all the freedoms of a married life ;
I know thee for a virtuous, faithful wife.'
" There's danger too, you think, in rich array,
And none can long be modest that are gay :
The cat, if you but singe her tabby skin,
The chimney keeps, and sits content within ;
But once grown sleek, will from her corner run,
Sport with her tail, and wanton in the sun ;
She licks her fair round face, and frisks abroad,
To show her fur, and to be catterwawed."
Lo thus, my friends, I wrought to my desires
These three right ancient venerable sires.
I told them, 'Thus you say, and thus you do,'
And told them false, but Jenkin swore 'twas true.
By this nice conduct, and this prudent course,
By murmuring, wheedling, stratagem, and force,
I still prevailed, and would be in the right,
Or curtain-lectures made a restless night.
Well, I may make my will in peace, and die,
For not one word in man's arrears am I.
To drop a dear dispute I was unable,
E'en though the Pope himself had sat at table.
But when my point was gained, then thus I spoke,
" Billy, my dear, how sheepishly you look?
Approach, my spouse, and let me kiss thy cheek ;
Thou shouldst be always thus, resigned and meek !
Of Job's great patience since so oft you preach,
Well should you practise, who so well can teach.
'Tis difficult to do, I must allow,
But I, my dearest, will instruct you how.
Great is the blessing of a prudent wife,

Who puts a period to domestic strife.
One of us two must rule, and one obey ;
And since in man right reason bears the sway,
Let that frail thing, weak woman, have her way.
The wives of all my family have ruled
Their tender husbands, and their passions cooled.
Thus with my first three lords I passed my life ;
A very woman, and a very wife.
What sums from these old spouses I could raise,
Procured young husbands in my riper days.
Though past my bloom, nor yet decayed was I,
Wanton and wild, and chattered like a pye.
In country dances still I bore the bell,
And sung as sweet as evening Philomel.
But oh, good gods ! whene'er a thought I cast
On all the joys of youth and beauty past,
To find in pleasures I have had my part,
Still warms me to the bottom of my heart.
This wicked world was once my dear delight ;
Now all my conquests, all my charms, good night !
The flour consumed, the best that now I can,
Is e'en to make my market of the bran.
My fourth dear spouse was not exceeding true ;
He did me, as I thought, a wrong or two :
But I so dressed and danced, and drank, and dined,
And viewed a friend, with eyes so very kind,
As stung his heart, and made his marrow fry,
With burning rage and frantic jealousy.
His soul, I hope, enjoys eternal glory,
For here on earth I was his purgatory.
Oft, when his shoe the most severely wrung,
He put on careless airs, and sat and sung.
How sore I galled him, only Heaven could know,
And he that felt, and I that caused the woe.
He died, when last from pilgrimage I came,
With other gossips, from Jerusalem ;

And now lies buried underneath a rood,
Fair to be seen, and reared of honest wood.
A tomb indeed with fewer sculptures graced
Than that Mausolus' pious widow placed,
Or where inshrined the great Darius lay;
But cost on graves is merely thrown away.
The pit filled up, with turf we covered o'er;
So bless the good man's soul, I say no more.

Now for my fifth loved lord, the last and best;
(Kind Heaven afford him everlasting rest)
Full hearty was his love, and I can shew
The token on my ribs in black and blue;
Yet, with a knack, my heart he could have won,
While yet the smart was shooting in the bone.

In pure good will I took this jovial spark,
Of Oxford he, a most egregious clerk.
He boarded with a widow in the town,
A trusty gossip, one dame Alison.
Full well the secrets of my soul she knew,
Better than e'er our parish priest could do.

It so befell, in holy time of Lent,
That oft a day I to this gossip went
(My husband, thank my stars, was out of town);
From house to house we rambled up and down,
This clerk, myself, and my good neighbour Alse,
To see, be seen, to tell, and gather tales.
Visits to every church we daily paid,
And marched in every holy masquerade,
The stations duly, and the vigils kept;
Not much we fasted, but scarce ever slept.
At sermons too I shone in scarlet gay,
The wasting moth ne'er spoiled my best array;
The cause was this, I wore it every day.

'Twas when fresh May her early blossoms yields,
This clerk and I were walking in the fields.
We grew so intimate I can't tell how,

I pawned my honour and engaged my vow,
If e'er I laid my husband in his urn,
That he, and only he, should serve my turn.
We straight struck hands, the bargain was agreed ;
I still have shifts against a time of need :
The mouse that always trusts to one poor hole,
Can never be a mouse of any soul.

I vowed, I scarce could sleep since first I knew him,
And durst be sworn he had bewitched me to him ;
If e'er I slept, I dreamed of him alone,
And dreams foretell, as learned men have shown :
All this I said ; but dream, sirs, I had none :
I followed but my crafty crony's lore,
Who bid me tell this lie—and twenty more.

Thus day by day, and month by month we passed ;
It pleased the Lord to take my spouse at last.
I tore my gown, I soiled my locks with dust,
And beat my breasts, as wretched widows—must.
Before my face my handkerchief I spread,
To hide the flood of tears I did not shed.
The good man's coffin to the church was borne ;
Around, the neighbours, and my clerk too, mourn.
But as he marched, good gods ! he showed a pair
Of legs and feet, so clean, so strong, so fair !
Of twenty winters' age he seemed to be ;
I (to say truth) was twenty more than he ;
But vigorous still, a lively buxom dame ;
And had a wondrous gift to quench a flame.
A conjurer once, that deeply could divine,
Assured me, Mars in Taurus was my sign.
As the stars ordered, such my life has been :
Alas, alas, that ever love was sin !
Fair Venus gave me fire, and sprightly grace,
And Mars assurance, and a dauntless face.
By virtue of this powerful constellation,
I followed always my own inclination.

But to my tale: A month scarce passed away,
With dance and song we kept the nuptial day.
All I possessed I gave to his command,
My goods and chattels, money, house, and land:
But oft repented, and repent it still;
He proved a rebel to my sovereign will:
Nay once, by Heaven, he struck me on the face;
Hear but the fact, and judge yourselves the case.
Stubborn as any lioness was I;
And knew full well to raise my voice on high:
As true a rambler as I was before,
And would be so in spite of all he swore.
He against this right sagely would advise,
And old examples set before my eyes,
Tell how the Roman matrons led their life,
Of Gracchus' mother and Duilius' wife;
And chose the sermon, as beseemed his wit,
With some grave sentence out of Holy Writ.
Oft would he say, who builds his house on sands,
Pricks his blind horse across the fallow lands,
Or lets his wife abroad with pilgrims roam,
Deserves a fool's-cap and long ears at home.
All this availed not; for whoe'er he be
That tells my faults, I hate him mortally:
And so do numbers more, I'll boldly say,
Men, women, clergy, regular and lay.
My spouse (who was, you know, to learning bred),
A certain treatise oft at evening read,
Where divers authors (whom the devil confound
For all their lies) were in one volume bound.
Valerius, whole; and of St. Jerome, part;
Chrysippus and Tertullian, Ovid's Art,
Solomon's proverbs, Eloïsa's loves;
And many more than sure the Church approves.
More legends were there here of wicked wives,
Than good in all the Bible and Saints' Lives.

Who drew the lion vanquished? 'Twas a man.
But could we women write as scholars can,
Men should stand marked with far more wickedness
Than all the sons of Adam could redress.
Love seldom haunts the breast where learning lies,
And Venus sets ere Mercury can rise.
Those play the scholars who can't play the men,
And use that weapon which they have, their pen;
When old, and past the relish of delight,
Then down they sit, and in their dotage write,
That not one woman keeps her marriage-vow.
(This by the way, but to my purpose now.)
It chanced my husband, on a winter's night,
Read in this book, aloud, with strange delight,
How the first female (as the Scriptures show)
Brought her own spouse and all his race to woe.
How Samson fell; and he whom Dejanire
Wrapped in the envenomed shirt, and set on fire.
How cursed Eryphile her lord betrayed.
And the dire ambush Clytæmnestra laid.
He had by heart the whole detail of woe
Xanthippe made her goodman undergo;
How oft she scolded in a day, he knew,
What jugs of water on the sage she threw;
Who took it patiently, and wiped his head;
"Rain follows thunder," that was all he said.
He read, how Arius to his friend complained,
A fatal tree was growing in his land,
On which three wives successively had twined
A sliding noose, and wavered in the wind.
"Where grows this plant," replied the friend, "oh, where?
For better fruit did never orchard bear.
Give me some slip of this most blissful tree,
And in my garden planted shall it be."
Then how two wives their lord's destruction prove

Through hatred one, and one through too much love ;
That for her husband mixed a poisonous draught,
And this for love an amorous philtre bought :
The nimble juice soon seized his giddy head,
Frantic at night, and in the morning dead.
How some with swords their sleeping lords have slain,
And some have hammered nails into their brain,
And some have drenched them with a deadly potion ;
All this he read, and read with great devotion.
Long time I heard, and swelled, and blushed, and frowned,
But when no end of these vile tales I found,
When still he read, and laughed, and read again,
And half the night was thus consumed in vain ;
Provoked to vengeance, three large leaves I tore,
And with one buffet felled him on the floor.
With that my husband in a fury rose,
And down he settled me with hearty blows.
I groaned, and lay extended on my side ;
"Oh ! thou hast slain me for my wealth," I cried,
"Yet I forgive thee—take my last embrace."
He wept, kind soul ! and stooped to kiss my face ;
I took him such a box as turned him blue,
Then sighed and cried, "Adieu, my dear, adieu !"
But after many a hearty struggle past,
I condescended to be pleased at last.
Soon as he said, "My mistress and my wife,
Do what you list, the term of all your life :"
I took to heart the merits of the cause,
And stood content to rule by wholesome laws ;
Received the reins of absolute command,
With all the government of house and land,
And empire o'er his tongue, and o'er his hand.
As for the volume that reviled the dames,
'Twas torn to fragments, and condemned to flames.

Now Heaven on all my husbands gone bestow
Pleasures above, for tortures felt below:
That rest they wished for, grant them in the grave,
And bless those souls my conduct helped to save.

THE FIRST BOOK
OF
STATIUS IIIS THEBAIS.

Translated in the Year 1703.

FRATERNAL rage the guilty Thebes alarms,
Th' alternate reign destroyed by impious arms
Demand our song; a sacred fury fires
My ravished breast, and all the Muse inspires.
O goddess! say, shall I deduce my rhymes
From the dire nation in its early times,
Europa's rape, Agenor's stern decree,
And Cadmus searching round the spacious sea?
How with the serpent's teeth he sowed the soil,
And reaped an iron harvest of his toil;
Or how from joining stones the city sprung,
While to his harp divine Amphion sung?
Or shall I Juno's hate to Thebes resound,
Whose fatal rage th' unhappy monarch found?
The sire against the son his arrows drew,
O'er the wide fields the furious mother flew,
And while her arms a second hope contain,
Sprung from the rocks, and plunged into the main.
But waive whate'er to Cadmus may belong.
And fix, O Muse! the barrier of thy song
At Œdipus—from his disasters trace
The long confusions of his guilty race:
Nor yet attempt to stretch thy bolder wing,

And mighty Cæsar's conquering eagles sing ;
How twice he tamed proud Ister's rapid flood,
While Dacian mountains streamed with barbarous blood ;
Twice taught the Rhine beneath his laws to roll,
And stretched his empire to the frozen pole ;
Oh, long before, with early valour strove
In youthful arms t' assert the cause of Jove.
And thou, great heir of all thy father's fame,
Increase of glory to the Latian name !
Oh, bless thy Rome with an eternal reign,
Nor let desiring worlds entreat in vain.
What though the stars contract their heavenly space,
And crowd their shining ranks to yield thee place ;
Though all the skies, ambitious of thy sway,
Conspire to court thee from our world away ;
Though Phœbus longs to mix his rays with thine,
And in thy glories more serenely shine ;
Though Jove himself no less content would be
To part his throne, and share his heaven with thee ;
Yet stay, great Cæsar ! and vouchsafe to reign
O'er the wide earth, and o'er the watery main ;
Resign to Jove his empire of the skies,
And people heaven with Roman deities.
The time will come when a diviner flame,
Shall warm my breast to sing of Cæsar's fame :
Meanwhile permit that my preluding Muse
In Theban wars a humbler theme may choose :
Of furious hate surviving death she sings,
A fatal throne to two contending kings,
And funeral flames that, parting wide in air,
Express the discord of the souls they bear :
Of towns dispeopled, and the wandering ghosts
Of kings unburied in the wasted coasts :
When Dirce's fountain blushed with Grecian blood,
And Thetis, near Ismenos' swelling flood,

With dread beheld the rolling surges sweep
In heaps his slaughtered sons into the deep.
What hero, Clio! wilt thou first relate?
The rage of Tydeus, or the prophet's fate?
Or how, with hills of slain on every side,
Hippomedon repelled the hostile tide?
Or how the youth, with every grace adorned,
Untimely fell, to be for ever mourned?
Then to fierce Capaneus thy verse extend,
And sing with horror his prodigious end.
Now wretched Œdipus, deprived of sight,
Led a long death in everlasting night;
But while he dwells where not a cheerful ray
Can pierce the darkness, and abhors the day;
The clear reflecting mind presents his sin
In frightful views, and makes it day within;
Returning thoughts in endless circles roll,
And thousand furies haunt his guilty soul:
The wretch then lifted to th' unpitying skies
Those empty orbs from whence he tore his eyes,
Whose wounds, yet fresh, with bloody hands he strook,
While from his breast these dreadful accents broke:
"Ye gods! that o'er the gloomy regions reign,
Where guilty spirits feel eternal pain;
Thou, sable Styx! whose livid streams are rolled
Through dreary coasts, which I though blind behold;
Tisiphone! that oft has heard my prayer,
Assist, if Œdipus deserve thy care.
If you receive me from Jocasta's womb,
And nursed the hope of mischiefs yet to come;
If, leaving Polybus, I took my way
To Cirrha's temple, on that fatal day
When by the son the trembling father died.
Where the three roads the Phocian fields divide:
If I the Sphinx's riddles durst explain,
Taught by thyself to win the promised reign;

If wretched I, by baleful Furies led,
With monstrous mixture stained my mother's bed;
For hell and thee begot an impious brood,
And with full lust those horrid joys renewed;
Then, self-condemned, to shades of endless night,
Forced from these orbs the bleeding balls of sight;
Oh, hear! and aid the vengeance I require,
If worthy thee, and what thou might'st inspire.
My sons their old, unhappy sire despise,
Spoiled of his kingdom, and deprived of eyes;
Guideless I wander, unregarded mourn,
While these exalt their sceptres o'er my urn;
These sons, ye gods! who with flagitious pride,
Insult my darkness and my groans deride.
Art thou a father, unregarding Jove!
And sleeps thy thunder in the realms above?
Thou Fury! then some lasting curse entail,
Which o'er their children's children shall prevail;
Place on their heads that crown distained with gore,
Which these dire hands from my slain father tore;
Go! and a parent's heavy curses bear;
Break all the bonds of nature, and prepare
Their kindred souls to mutual hate and war.
Give them to dare, what I might wish to see,
Blind as I am, some glorious villainy!
Soon shalt thou find, if thou but arm their hands,
Their ready guilt preventing thy commands:
Couldst thou some great proportioned mischief frame.
They'd prove the father from whose loins they came."

The Fury heard, while on Cocytus' brink
Her snakes, untied, sulphureous waters drink;
But at the summons rolled her eyes around,
And snatched the starting serpents from the ground.
Not half so swiftly shoots along in air,
The gliding lightning, or descending star.
Through crowds of airy shades she'd winged her flight,

And dark dominions of the silent night;
Swift as she passed, the flitting ghosts withdrew.
And the pale spectres trembled at her view:
To th' iron gates of Tænarus she flies,
There spreads her dusky pinions to the skies,
The day beheld, and sickening at the sight,
Veiled her fair glories in the shades of night.
Affrighted Atlas, on the distant shore,
Trembled, and shook the heavens and gods he bore.
Now from beneath Malea's airy height
Aloft she sprung, and steered to Thebes her flight:
With eager speed the well-known journey took,
Nor here regrets the hell she late forsook.
A hundred snakes her gloomy visage shade,
A hundred serpents guard her horrid head,
In her sunk eye-balls dreadful meteors glow:
Such rays from Phœbe's bloody circle flow,
When labouring with strong charms, she shoots from high
A fiery gleam, and reddens all the sky.
Blood stained her cheeks, and from her mouth there came
Blue steaming poisons, and a length of flame.
From every blast of her contagious breath,
Famine and drought proceed, and plagues, and death.
A robe obscene was o'er her shoulders thrown,
A dress by Fates and Furies worn alone.
She tossed her meagre arms; her better hand
In waving circles whirled a funeral brand:
A serpent from her left was seen to rear
His flaming crest, and lash the yielding air.
But when the Fury took her stand on high,
Where vast Cithæron's top salutes the sky,
A hiss from all the snaky tire went round:
The dreadful signal all the rocks rebound,
And through the Achaian cities send the sound.

Oete, with high Parnassus, heard the voice ;
Eurota's banks remurmured to the noise ;
Again Leucothoë shook at these alarms,
And pressed Palæmon closer in her arms.
Headlong from thence the glowing Fury springs,
And o'er the Theban palace spreads her wings,
Once more invades the guilty dome, and shrouds
Its bright pavilions in a veil of clouds.
Straight with the rage of all their race possessed,
Stung to the soul, the brothers start from rest,
And all their furies wake within their breast.
Their tortured minds repining envy tears,
And hate, engendered by suspicious fears ;
And sacred thirst of sway ; and all the ties
Of nature broke ; and royal perjuries ;
And impotent desire to reign alone,
That scorns the dull reversion of a throne ;
Each would the sweets of sovereign rule devour,
While discord waits upon divided power.

As stubborn steers by brawny ploughmen broke,
And joined reluctant to the galling yoke,
Alike disdain with servile necks to bear
Th' unwonted weight, or drag the crooked share,
But rend the reins, and bound a different way,
And all the furrows in confusion lay :
Such was the discord of the royal pair,
Whom fury drove precipitate to war.
In vain the chiefs contrived a specious way,
To govern Thebes by their alternate sway :
Unjust decree ! while this enjoys the state,
That mourns in exile his unequal fate,
And the short monarch of a hasty year
Foresees with anguish his returning heir.
Thus did the league their impious arms restrain,
But scarce subsisted to the second reign.

Yet then, no proud aspiring piles were raised,

No fretted roofs with polished metals blazed ;
No laboured columns in long order placed,
No Grecian stone the pompous arches graced ;
No nightly bands in glittering armour wait
Before the sleepless tyrant's guarded gate ;
No chargers then were wrought in burnished gold.
No silver vases took the forming mould ;
Nor gems on bowls embossed were seen to shine,
Blaze on the brims, and sparkle in the wine—
Say, wretched rivals ! what provokes your rage ?
Say, to what end your impious arms engage ?
Not all bright Phœbus views in early morn,
Or when his evening beams the west adorn,
When the south glows with his meridian ray,
And the cold north receives a fainter day ;
For crimes like these, not all those realms suffice,
Were all those realms the guilty victor's prize !
But fortune now (the lots of empire thrown)
Decrees to proud Eteocles the crown :
What joys, O tyrant, swelled thy soul that day,
When all were slaves thou couldst around survey,
Pleased to behold unbounded power thy own,
And singly fill a feared and envyed throne !
But the vile vulgar, ever discontent,
Their growing fears in secret murmurs vent ;
Still prone to change, though still the slaves of state,
And sure the monarch whom they have, to hate ;
New lords they madly make, then tamely bear,
And softly curse the tyrants whom they fear.
And one of those who groan beneath the sway
Of kings imposed and grudgingly obey,
(Whom envy to the great, and vulgar spite
With scandal armed, th' ignoble mind's delight,)
Exclaimed—" O Thebes ! for thee what fates remain,
What woes attend this inauspicious reign ?
Must we, alas ! our doubtful necks prepare,

Each haughty master's yoke by turns to bear,
And still to change whom changed we still must
fear?
These now control a wretched people's fate,
These can divide, and these reverse the state:
E'en Fortune rules no more:—O servile land,
Where exiled tyrants still by turns command!
Thou sire of gods and men, imperial Jove!
Is this th' eternal doom decreed above?
On thy own offspring hast thou fixed this fate,
From the first birth of our unhappy state;
When banished Cadmus, wandering o'er the main,
For lost Europa searched the world in vain,
And fated in Bœotian fields to found
A rising empire on a foreign ground,
First raised our walls on that ill-omened plain,
Where earth-born brothers were by brothers slain?
What lofty looks th' unrivalled monarch bears!
How all the tyrant in his face appears!
What sullen fury clouds his scornful brow!
Gods! how his eyes with threatening ardour glow!
Can this imperious lord forget to reign,
Quit all his state, descend, and serve again?
Yet who, before, more popularly bowed,
Who more propitious to the suppliant crowd?
Patient of right, familiar in the throne?
What wonder then? he was not then alone.
Oh, wretched we, a vile, submissive train,
Fortune's tame fools, and slaves in every reign!
As when two winds with rival force contend,
This way and that, the wavering sails they bend,
While freezing Boreas and black Eurus blow,
Now here, now there, the reeling vessel throw:
Thus on each side, alas! our tottering state
Feels all the fury of resistless fate,
And doubtful still, and still distracted stands,

While that prince threatens and while this commands.

And now th' almighty Father of the gods
Convenes a council in the blest abodes :
Far in the bright recesses of the skies,
High o'er the rolling heavens, a mansion lies,
Whence, far below, the gods at once survey
The realms of rising and declining day,
And all th' extended space of earth, of air, and sea.
Full in the midst, and on the starry throne,
The Majesty of heaven superior shone ;
Serene he looked, and gave an awful nod,
And all the trembling spheres confessed the God.
At Jove's assent, the deities around
In solemn state the consistory crowned,
Next a long order of inferior powers
Ascend from hills and plains, and shady bowers ;
Those from whose urns the rolling rivers flow,
And those that give the wandering winds to blow :
Here all their rage, and e'en their murmurs cease,
And sacred silence reigns, and universal peace.
A shining synod of majestic Gods
Gilds with new lustre the divine abodes ;
Heaven seemed improved with a superior ray,
And the bright arch reflects a double day.
The monarch then his solemn silence broke,
The still creation listened while he spoke,
Each sacred accent bears eternal weight,
And each irrevocable word is fate.

How long shall man the wrath of Heaven defy,
And force unwilling vengeance from the sky !
Oh, race confederate into crimes that prove
Triumphant o'er th' eluded rage of Jove !
This wearied arm can scarce the bolt sustain,
And unregarded thunder rolls in vain :
Th' o'erlaboured Cyclop from his task retires ;

Th' Æolian forge exhausted of its fires.
For this I suffered Phœbus' steeds to stray,
And the mad ruler to misguide the day.
When the wide earth to heaps of ashes turned
And Heaven itself the wandering chariot burned.
For this my brother of the watery reign
Released th' impetuous sluices of the main :
But flames consumed and billows raged in vain.
Two races now, allied to Jove, offend ;
To punish these see Jove himself descend.
The Theban Kings their line from Cadmus trace,
From godlike Perseus those of Argive race.
Unhappy Cadmus' fate who does not know ?
And the long series of succeeding woe :
How oft the Furies, from the deeps of night,
Arose and mixed with men in mortal fight :
Th' exulting mother, stained with filial blood ;
The savage hunter and the haunted wood :
The direful banquet why should I proclaim,
And crimes that grieve the trembling gods to name ?
Ere I recount the sins of these profane,
The sun would sink into the western main,
And rising gild the radiant east again.
Have we not seen (the blood of Laius shed)
The murdering son ascend his parent's bed,
Through violated nature force his way,
And stain the sacred womb where once he lay ?
Yet now in darkness and despair he groans,
And for the crimes of guilty fate atones ;
His sons with scorn their eyeless father view,
Insult his wounds, and make them bleed anew.
Thy curse, O Œdipus, just Heaven alarms,
And sets th' avenging Thunderer in arms.
I from the root thy guilty race will tear,
And give the nations to the waste of war.
Adrastus soon, with gods averse, shall join.

In dire alliance with the Theban line ;
Hence strife shall rise, and mortal war succeed ;
The guilty realms of Tantalus shall bleed ;
Fixed is their doom ; this all-remembering breast
Yet harbours vengeance for the tyrant's feast.
He said ; and thus the queen of heaven returned ;
(With sudden grief her labouring bosom burned) ;
Must I, whose cares Phoroneus' towers defend,
Must I, O Jove, in bloody wars contend ?
Thou know'st those regions my protection claim,
Glorious in arms, in riches, and in fame :
Though there the fair Egyptian heifer fed,
And there deluded Argus slept, and bled ;
Though there the brazen tower was stormed of old.
When Jove descended in almighty gold,
Yet I can pardon those obscurer rapes,
Those bashful crimes disguised in borrowed shapes ;
But Thebes, where shining in celestial charms
Thou cam'st triumphant to a mortal's arms,
When all my glories o'er her limbs were spread,
And blazing lightnings danced around her bed ;
Cursed Thebes the vengeance it deserves, may prove—
Ah, why should Argos feel the rage of Jove ?
Yet since thou wilt thy sister-queen control,
Since still the lust of discord fires thy soul,
Go, rase my Samos, let Mycenæ fall,
And level with the dust the Spartan wall ;
No more let mortals Juno's power invoke,
Her fanes no more with eastern incense smoke,
Nor victims sink beneath the sacred stroke ;
But to your Isis all my rites transfer,
Let altars blaze and temples smoke for her ;
For her, through Egypt's fruitful clime renowned.
Let weeping Nilus hear the timbrel sound.
But if thou must reform the stubborn times,
Avenging on the sons the fathers' crimes,

And from the long records of distant age
Derive incitements to renew thy rage;
Say, from what period then has Jove designed
To date his vengeance, to what bounds confined?
Begin from thence, where first Alpheus hides
His wandering stream, and through the briny tides
Unmixed to his Sicilian river glides.
Thy own Arcadians there the thunder claim,
Whose impious rites disgrace thy mighty name;
Who raise thy temples where the chariot stood
Of fierce Oenomäus, defiled with blood;
Where once his steeds their savage banquet found,
And human bones yet whiten all the ground.
Say, can those honours please: and canst thou love
Presumptuous Crete that boasts the tomb of Jove?
And shall not Tantalus's kingdoms share
Thy wife and sister's tutelary care?
Reverse, O Jove, thy too severe decree,
Nor doom to war a race derived from thee;
On impious realms and barbarous kings impose
Thy plagues, and curse them with such sons as those."
Thus, in reproach and prayer, the queen expressed
The rage and grief contending in her breast;
Unmoved remained the ruler of the sky,
And from his throne returned this stern reply:
"'Twas thus I deemed thy haughty soul would bear
The dire, though just, revenge which I prepare
Against a nation, thy peculiar care:
No less Dione might for Thebes contend,
Nor Bacchus less his native town defend,
Yet these in silence see the Fates fulfil
Their work, and reverence our superior will.
For by the black infernal Styx I swear
(That dreadful oath which binds the Thunderer),
'Tis fixed; th' irrevocable doom of Jove;
No force can bend me, no persuasion move.

Haste then, Cyllenius, through the liquid air ;
Go, mount the winds, and to the shades repair ;
Bid hell's black monarch my commands obey,
And give up Laius to the realms of day,
Whose ghost yet shivering on Cocytus' sand,
Expects its passage to the further strand :
Let the pale sire revisit Thebes, and bear
These pleasing orders to the tyrant's ear ;
That, from his exiled brother, swelled with pride
Of foreign forces and his Argive bride,
Almighty Jove commands him to detain
The promised empire, and alternate reign :
Be this the cause of more than mortal hate :
The rest, succeeding times shall ripen into Fate."

The god obeys, and to his feet applies
Those golden wings that cut the yielding skies ;
His ample hat his beamy locks o'erspread,
And veiled the starry glories of his head !
He seized the wand that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumbers seals the wakeful eye ;
That drives the dead to dark Tartarean coasts,
Or back to life compels the wandering ghosts.
Thus, through the parting clouds, the son of May
Wings on the whistling winds his rapid way ;
Now smoothly steers through air his equal flight,
Now springs aloft, and towers th' ethereal height ;
Then wheeling down the steep of heaven he flies,
And draws a radiant circle o'er the skies.

Meantime the banished Polynices roves
(His Thebes abandoned) through the Aonian groves,
While future realms his wandering thoughts delight,
His daily vision and his dream by night ;
Forbidden Thebes appears before his eye,
From whence he sees his absent brother fly.
With transport views the airy rule his own,
And swells on an imaginary throne,

Fain would he cast a tedious age away,
And live out all in one triumphant day.
He chides the lazy progress of the sun,
And bids the year with swifter motion run.
With anxious hopes his craving mind is tossed,
And all his joys in length of wishes lost.
The hero then resolves his course to bend
Where ancient Danaus' fruitful fields extend,
And famed Mycenæ's lofty towers ascend,
(Where late the sun did Atreus' crimes detest,
And disappeared in horror of the feast).
And now by chance, by fate, or furies led,
From Bacchus' consecrated caves he fled,
Where the shrill cries of frantic matrons sound,
And Pentheus' blood enriched the rising ground.
Then sees Cithæron towering o'er the plain,
And thence declining gently to the main.
Next to the bounds of Nisus' realm repairs,
Where treacherous Scylla cuts the purple hairs:
The hanging cliffs of Scyron's rock explores,
And hears the murmurs of the different shores:
Passes the strait that parts the foaming seas,
And stately Corinth's pleasing site surveys.
'Twas now the time when Phœbus yields to night
And rising Cynthia sheds her silver light,
Wide o'er the world in solemn pomp she drew,
Her airy chariot hung with pearly dew;
All birds and beasts lie hushed; sleep steals away
The wild desires of men, and toils of day,
And brings, descending through the silent air,
A sweet forgetfulness of human care.
Yet no red clouds, with golden borders gay,
Promise the skies the bright return of day;
No faint reflections of the distant light
Streak with long gleams the scattering shades of night;
From the damp earth impervious vapours rise,

Increase the darkness and involve the skies.
At once the rushing winds with roaring sound
Burst from th' Æolian caves, and rend the ground,
With equal rage their airy quarrel try,
And win by turns the kingdom of the sky:
But with a thicker night black Auster shrouds
The heavens, and drives on heaps the rolling clouds,
From whose dark womb a rattling tempest pours,
Which the cold north congeals to haily showers.
From pole to pole the thunder roars aloud,
And broken lightnings flash from every cloud.
Now smokes with showers the misty mountain-ground
And floated fields lie undistinguished round.
The Inachian streams with headlong fury run,
And Erasinus rolls a deluge on:
The foaming Lerna swells above its bounds,
And spreads its ancient poisons o'er the grounds:
Where late was dust, now rapid torrents play,
Rush through the mounds, and bear the dams away;
Old limbs of trees from crackling forests torn,
Are whirled in air, and on the winds are borne,
The storm the dark Lycæan groves displayed,
And first to light exposed the sacred shade.
The intrepid Theban hears the bursting sky,
Sees yawning rocks in massy fragments fly,
And views astonished, from the hills afar,
The floods descending, and the watery war,
That, driven by storms and pouring o'er the plain,
Swept herds, and hinds, and houses to the main.
Through the brown horrors of the night he fled,
Nor knows, amazed, what doubtful path to tread,
His brother's image to his mind appears,
Inflames his heart with rage, and wings his feet with fears.

So fares a sailor on the stormy main,
When clouds conceal Boötes' golden wain,

When not a star its friendly lustre keeps,
Nor trembling Cynthia glimmers on the deeps;
He dreads the rocks, and shoals, and seas, and skies,
While thunder roars, and lightning round him flies.
Thus strove the chief, on every side distressed,
Thus still his courage with his toils increased;
With his broad shield opposed, he forced his way,
Through thickest woods, and roused the beasts of prey.
Till he beheld, where from Larissa's height
The shelving walls reflect a glancing light:
Thither with haste the Theban hero flies;
On this side Lerna's poisonous water lies,
On that Prosymna's grove and temple rise:
He passed the gates which then unguarded lay,
And to the regal palace bent his way;
On the cold marble, spent with toil, he lies,
And waits till pleasing slumbers seal his eyes.
Adrastus here his happy people sways,
Blest with calm peace in his declining days,
By both his parents of descent divine,
Great Jove and Phœbus graced his noble line:
Heaven had not crowned his wishes with a son,
But two fair daughters heired his state and throne.
To him Apollo (wondrous to relate!
But who can pierce into the depths of fate!)
Had sung—"Expect thy sons on Argos' shore,
A yellow lion and a bristly boar."
This long revolved in his paternal breast,
Sate heavy on his heart, and broke his rest;
This, great Amphiaraus, lay hid from thee,
Though skilled in fate, and dark futurity.
The father's care and prophet's art were vain,
For thus did the predicting god ordain.
Lo, hapless Tydeus, whose ill-fated hand
Had slain his brother, leaves his native land,

And, seized with horror in the shades of night,
Through the thick deserts headlong urged his flight :
Now by the fury of the tempest driven,
He seeks a shelter from the inclement heaven,
Till led by fate, the Theban's steps he treads,
And to fair Argos' open court succeeds.

When thus the chiefs from different lands resort
T' Adrastus' realms, and hospitable court ;
The king surveys his guests with curious eyes,
And views their arms and habit with surprise.
A lion's yellow skin the Theban wears,
Horrid his mane, and rough with curling hairs ;
Such once employed Alcides' youthful toils,
Ere yet adorned with Nemea's dreadful spoils
A boar's stiff hide, of Caledonian breed,
Oenides' manly shoulders overspread.
Oblique his tusks, erect his bristles stood,
Alive, the pride and terror of the wood.

Struck with the sight, and fixed in deep amaze,
The king the accomplished Oracle surveys,
Reveres Apollo's vocal caves, and owns
The guiding godhead, and his future sons.
O'er all his bosom secret transports reign,
And a glad horror shoots through every vein.
To heaven he lifts his hands, erects his sight,
And thus invokes the silent Queen of Night.

" Goddess of shades, beneath whose gloomy reign
Yon spangled arch glows with the starry train :
You who the cares of heaven and earth allay,
'Till nature, quickened by the inspiring ray,
Wakes to new vigour with the rising day,
O thou who freest me from my doubtful state,
Long lost and wildered in the maze of Fate !
Be present still, O goddess, in our aid ;
Proceed, and 'firm those omens thou hast made.
We to thy name our annual rites will pay.

And on thy altars sacrifices lay ;
The sable flock shall fall beneath the stroke,
And fill thy temples with a grateful smoke.
Hail, faithful Tripos ! hail, ye dark abodes
Of awful Phœbus ! I confess the god ! "

Thus, seized with sacred fear, the monarch prayed ;
Then to his inner court the guests conveyed ;
Where yet thin fumes from dying sparks arise,
And dust yet white upon each altar lies,
The relics of a former sacrifice.
The king once more the solemn rites requires,
And bids renew the feasts, and wake the fires.
His train obey, while all the courts around
With noisy care and various tumult sound.
Embroidered purple clothes the golden beds ;
This slave the floor, and that the table spreads ;
A third dispels the darkness of the night,
And fills depending lamps with beams of light ;
Here loaves in canisters are piled on high,
And there in flames, the slaughtered victims fry.
Sublime in regal state Adrastus shone,
Stretched on rich carpets on his ivory throne ;
A lofty couch receives each princely guest ;
Around, at awful distance, wait the rest.

And now the king, his royal feast to grace,
Acestis calls, the guardian of his race,
Who first their youth in arts of virtue trained,
And their ripe years in modest grace maintained.
Then softly whispered in her faithful ear,
And bade his daughters at the rites appear.
When from the close apartments of the night
The royal nymphs approach divinely bright ;
Such was Diana's, such Minerva's face ;
Nor shine their beauties with superior grace,
But that in these a milder charm endears,
And less of terror in their looks appears,

As on the heroes first they cast their eyes,
O'er their fair cheeks the glowing blushes rise,
Their downcast looks a decent shame confessed,
Then on their father's reverend features rest.
The banquet done, the monarch gives the sign
To fill the goblet high with sparkling wine,
Which Danaus used in sacred rites of old,
With sculpture graced, and rough with rising gold.
Here to the clouds victorious Perseus flies,
Medusa seems to move her languid eyes,
And e'en in gold, turns paler as she dies.
There from the chase Jove's towering eagle bears,
On golden wings, the Phrygian to the stars:
Still as he rises in the ethereal height,
His native mountains lessen to his sight;
While all his sad companions upward gaze,
Fixed on the glorious scene in wild amaze;
And the swift hounds, affrighted as he flies,
Run to the shade, and bark against the skies.
This golden bowl with generous juice was crowned,
The first libations sprinkled on the ground,
By turns on each celestial power they call;
With Phœbus' name resounds the vaulted hall.
The courtly train, the strangers, and the rest,
Crowned with chaste laurel and with garlands dressed,
While with rich gums the fuming altars blaze,
Salute the god in numerous hymns of praise.
Then thus the king: "Perhaps, my noble guests,
These honoured altars, and these annual feasts
To bright Apollo's awful name designed,
Unknown, with wonder may perplex your mind.
Great was the cause; our old solemnities
From no blind zeal or fond tradition rise:
But saved from death, our Argives yearly pay
These grateful honours to the God of Day.

" When by a thousand darts the Python slain
With orbs unrolled lay covering all the plain
(Transfixed as o'er Castalia's streams he hung,
And sucked new poisons with his triple tongue),
To Argos' realms the victor god resorts,
And enters old Crotopus' humble courts.
This rural prince one only daughter blest,
That all the charms of blooming youth possessed ;
Fair was her face, and spotless was her mind,
Where filial love with virgin sweetness joined.
Happy ! and happy still she might have proved,
Were she less beautiful, or less beloved !
But Phœbus loved, and on the flowery side
Of Nemea's stream, the yielding fair enjoyed :
Now, ere ten moons their orb with light adorn,
Th' illustrious offspring of the god was born,
The nymph, her father's anger to evade,
Retires from Argos to the sylvan shade ;
To woods and wilds the pleasing burden bears,
And trusts her infant to a shepherd's cares.
" How mean a fate, unhappy child is thine !
Ah, how unworthy those of race divine !
On flowery herbs in some green covert laid,
His bed the ground, his canopy the shade,
He mixes with the bleating lambs his cries,
While the rude swain his rural music tries,
To call soft slumbers on his infant eyes.
Yet even in those obscure abodes to live,
Was more, alas ! than cruel fate would give,
For on the grassy verdure as he lay,
And breathed the freshness of the early day,
Devouring dogs the helpless infant tore,
Fed on his trembling limbs, and lapped the gore.
Th' astonished mother, when the rumour came,
Forgets her father, and neglects her fame,
With loud complaints she fills the yielding air,

And beats her breast and rends her flowing hair ;
Then wild with anguish to her sire she flies,
Demands the sentence, and contented dies.
" But touched with sorrow for the dead too late,
The raging god prepares to avenge her fate.
He sends a monster, horrible and fell,
Begot by Furies in the depths of hell,
The pest a virgin's face and bosom bears ;
High on a crown a rising snake appears,
Guards her black front and hisses in her hairs :
About the realm she walks her dreadful round,
When night with sable wings o'erspreads the ground ;
Devours young babes before their parents' eyes,
And feeds and thrives on public miseries.
" But generous rage the bold Chorœbus warms.
Chorœbus, famed for virtue as for arms ;
Some few like him, inspired with martial flame,
Thought a short life well lost for endless fame.
These, where two ways in equal parts divide,
The direful monster from afar descried ;
Two bleeding babes depending at her side :
Whose panting vitals, warm with life, she draws,
And in their hearts embrues her cruel claws.
The youths surround her with extended spears :
But brave Chorœbus in the front appears,
Deep in her breast he plunged his shining sword,
And hell's dire monster back to hell restored.
Th' Inachians view the slain with vast surprise,
Her twisting volumes and her rolling eyes,
Her spotted breast, and gaping womb embrued
With livid poison, and our children's blood.
The crowd in stupid wonder fixed appear,
Pale e'en in joy, nor yet forget to fear.
Some with vast beams the squalid corpse engage,
And weary all the wild efforts of rage.
The birds obscene, that nightly flocked to taste,

With hollow screeches fled the dire repast ;
And ravenous dogs, allured by scented blood,
And starving wolves ran howling to the wood.
" But fired with rage from cleft Parnassus' brow,
Avenging Phœbus bent his deadly bow,
And hissing flew the feathered fates below ;
A night of sultry clouds involved around
The towers, the fields and the devoted ground :
And now a thousand lives together fled.
Death with his scythe cut off the fatal thread,
And a whole province in his triumph led.
" But Phœbus, asked why noxious fires appear,
And raging Sirius blasts the sickly year ;
Demands their lives by whom his monster fell,
And dooms a dreadful sacrifice to hell.
" Blessed be thy dust, and let eternal fame
Attend thy manes, and preserve thy name ;
Undaunted hero ! who divinely brave,
In such a cause disdained thy life to save ;
But viewed the shrine with a superior look,
And its upbraided godhead thus bespoke :
" ' With piety, the soul's securest guard,
And conscious virtue, still its own reward,
Willing I come, unknowing how to fear ;
Nor shalt thou, Phœbus, find a suppliant here.
Thy monster's death to me was owed alone,
And 'tis a deed too glorious to disown.
Behold him here, for whom, so many days,
Impervious clouds concealed thy sullen rays ;
For whom, as man no longer claimed thy care,
Such numbers fell by pestilential air !
But if th' abandoned race of human kind
From gods above no more compassion find ;
If such inclemency in Heaven can dwell,
Yet why must unoffending Argos feel
The vengeance due to this unlucky steel?

On me, on me, let all thy fury fall,
Nor err from me, since I deserve it all:
Unless our desert cities please thy sight,
Or funeral flames reflect a grateful light,
Discharge thy shafts, this ready bosom rend,
And to the shades a ghost triumphant send;
But for my country let my fate atone,
Be mine the vengeance, as the crime my own.'
"Merit distressed, impartial Heaven relieves:
Unwelcome life relenting Phœbus gives;
For not the vengeful power, that glowed with rage
With such amazing virtue durst engage.
The clouds dispersed, Apollo's wrath expired,
And from the wondering god th' unwilling youth retired.
Thence we these altars in his temple raise,
And offer annual honours, feasts, and praise;
These solemn feasts propitious Phœbus please;
These honours, still renewed, his ancient wrath appease.
"But say, illustrious guest" (adjoined the king)
"What name you bear, from what high race you spring?
The noble Tydeus stands confessed, and known
Our neighbour prince and heir of Calydon.
Relate your fortunes, while the friendly night
And silent hours to various talk invite."
The Theban bends on earth his gloomy eyes,
Confused, and sadly thus at length replies:
"Before these altars how shall I proclaim
(O generous prince) my nation or my name,
Or through what veins our ancient blood has rolled?
Let the sad tale for ever rest untold!
Yet if propitious to a wretch unknown,
You seek to share in sorrows not your own;
Know then from Cadmus I derive my race,

Jocasta's son, and Thebes my native place."
To whom the king (who felt his generous breast
Touched with concern for his unhappy guest)
Replies—"Ah, why forbears the son to name
His wretched father known too well by fame?
Fame, that delights around the world to stray,
Scorns not to take our Argos in her way,
E'en those who dwell where suns at distance roll,
In northern wilds, and freeze beneath the pole;
And those who tread the burning Libyan lands;
The faithless Syrtes and the moving sands;
Who view the western seas extremest bounds,
Or drink of Ganges in their eastern grounds;
All these the woes of Œdipus have known,
Your fates, your furies, and your haunted town.
If on the sons the parents' crimes descend,
What prince from those his lineage can defend?
Be this thy comfort, that 'tis thine t' efface
With virtuous acts thy ancestor's disgrace
And be thyself the honour of thy race.
But see! the stars begin to steal away,
And shine more faintly at approaching day;
Now pour the wine; and in your tuneful lays
Once more resound the great Apollo's praise."
"Oh, father Phœbus! whether Lycia's coast
And snowy mountains thy bright presence boast;
Whether to sweet Castalia thou repair,
And bathe in silver dews thy yellow hair;
Or pleased to find fair Delos float no more,
Delight in Cynthus, and the shady shore;
Or choose thy seat in Ilion's proud abodes,
The shining structures raised by labouring gods,
By thee the bow and mortal shafts are borne;
Eternal charms thy blooming youth adorn
Skilled in the laws of secret fate above,
And the dark counsels of almighty Jove,

'Tis thine the seeds of future war to know,
The change of sceptres, and impending woe ;
When direful meteors spread through glowing air
Long trails of light, and shake their blazing hair.
Thy rage the Phrygian felt, who durst aspire
T' excel the music of thy heavenly lyre ;
Thy shafts avenged lewd Tityus' guilty flame ;
Th' immortal victim of thy mother's fame ;
Thy hand slew Python, and the dame who lost
Her numerous offspring for a fatal boast.
In Phlegyas' doom thy just revenge appears,
Condemned to furies and eternal fears ;
He views his food, but dreads, with lifted eye,
The mouldering rock that trembles from on high.
" Propitious hear our prayer, O Power divine !
And on thy hospitable Argos shine,
Whether the style of Titan please thee more,
Whose purple rays th' Achæmenes adore ;
Or great Osiris, who first taught the swain
In Pharian fields to sow the golden grain ;
Or Mitra, to whose beams the Persian bows,
And pays, in hollow rocks, his awful vows ;
Mitra, whose head the blaze of light adorns,
Who grasps the struggling heifer's lunar horns."

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